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Our Iron Civilization, by Benton MacKaye, on page 342

# The Saturday Review of Literature

EDITED BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

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## On Reading Biographies

UNLESS readers become more critical in their choice of biographies, the newly revived taste for the most humane among all kinds of reading may die of surfeit. Anyone with spare time and access to a public library can now publish a biography. Previous works in the field are no hindrance, for it is assumed (quite correctly) that the new readers attracted by a spicy style and the methods of fiction have not read them. Rivalry merely broadens the market. In the American field alone, there have been, just in the last few years, four or five lives of Washington, four or five biographies of Jefferson, two of Jackson, two of Sam Houston, two of Andrew Johnson, two of Hawthorne, two of Grant, from fifteen to twenty of Lincoln, three of Poe, two of Audubon, two of Emerson. Most, but not all, of these books have some excuse for being, since American history needed more attention. But if we should list in addition the hundreds of "studies" and biographical sketches of well-known figures like Napoleon, Louis XIV, Dr. Johnson, Julius Cæsar, the Borgias, Franklin, Voltaire—many of which are merest rehashes of earlier sources—the approach of this art toward the margin of futility would begin to be evident.

There are three explanations for this biographical flood which has washed so far beyond any conceivable historical need.

It is said that all lives of great ones must be rewritten in the new "debunking" manner, until we get the Truth. But this is nonsense. A very slender proportion of the new books "debunk" their subjects, of whom indeed more need reinterpretation and better knowledge than exposure. Indeed, too many of these new biographies have sensational depreciation as their only claim upon interest. Nor is "showing up" a novelty. Thackeray and Macaulay practised it, and much modern history is an attempt to restore truth after its ravages. Poe, Carlyle, Leigh Hunt, Elizabeth, Aaron Burr,—the list of famous characters whose lives have been falsified by attempted "debunking" is a long one.

It is said that every age must make its own estimates of the great men and women of the past. True enough;—but how many estimates of a given individual are necessary, and is a weak, inaccurate study in the modern manner more valuable than a sound study based on different prejudices?

It is said that new readers must be fed with new books, that the fire of interest in the past must be kept burning by fresh-cut logs. New books are easier to sell than old ones. This is a familiar trade principle, but dangerous when applied to books. Made-to-order detective stories have been piled high upon the market for the same reason, and now the surfeit of second-hand tales is sending good readers back to the older and more original books, and indifferent readers elsewhere for their nourishment. The costume romance was dumped upon us in incredible quantities a generation ago, until readers grew tired of machine-made costume romance. Perhaps those subtle swings in public taste that have come ever more and more frequently in recent decades, are due not entirely to fundamental changes in taste, but in part at least to a reaction against too much stuffing with monotonous food of a poor quality.

A good biography should have at least four points of merit.

It should either add new material of importance to earlier books on the same theme, or should be written from a point of view so different as to constitute a new and valuable work, or it should be the first biography of its subject.

It should be more than a collection of facts about a man or woman. No biography is more than a source book unless its author can see in perspective the significance of an earlier life in terms of the present. This is what many of our new biographies purport to do, but they are often stronger in perspective than in facts. Their subjects become no more and no less, than characters of fiction.

It must be written with that intuitive imagination which constructs a living person from sets of words

(*Continued on page 340*)

## *Lines to Madame la Marquise*

(*From the French of Voltaire.*)

By A. HUGH FISHER

NO one could draw thy portrait:
Playful and serious, teasing and stern.
Cautious with air indiscreet,
Virtuous, coquette, thyself thou wouldst spurn,
The resemblance escapes as each feature we state,
If constant we paint thee thy whims we discern:
It never is thou we create
Faithful to feeling, tastes changeful as skies
All mens' hearts to thy car turn by turn captives prove:
Thou delightest the rakes, thou enslavest the wise,
Thou wilt conquer though proudest defies,
Thou doest the business of Love.
One thinks of that child, catching sight of thy face;
Of his youth, features, skill—it is odd—
His pleasures, his errors, his mischievous grace:
*Couldst* thou be, peradventure, that God?

### *This Week*

"The Captive."
Reviewed by PADRAIC COLUM.

"Selling Mrs. Consumer."
Reviewed by ORDWAY TEAD.

"The Peerless Leader."
Reviewed by WILLIAM MACDONALD.

"Black Roadways."
Reviewed by NEWBELL NILES PUCKETT.

"God Have Mercy on Us."
Reviewed by LEONARD NASON.

"It's a Great War."
Reviewed by FREDERIC J. KEPPEL.

The Pink Murder Case.
By CHRISTOPHER WARD.

"The Methodist Faun."
Reviewed by GRACE FRANK.

"A Conrad Memorial Library."
Reviewed by RICHARD CURLE.

### *Next Week, or Later*

"The Letters of Disraeli to Lady Chesterfield and Lady Bradford."
Reviewed by GEORGE ARLISS.

## The Blanket of the Past*

By PADRAIC COLUM

SOMETIMES it happens that an artistic form and method are prophesied long before they are created. The realization of the prophecy, I imagine, might greatly astonish the prophet. I am thinking now of a passage written by Hazlitt in which the form and method of "Remembrance of Things Past" is foreshown. Hazlitt wrote.—

> As in the theatre, when the old-fashioned green curtain drew up, groups of figures, fantastic dresses, laughing faces, rich banquets, stately columns, gleaming vistas, appeared beyond, so we have only at any time to "peep through the blanket of the past" to possess ourselves at once of all that has regaled our senses, that is stored up in our memory, that has struck our fancy, that has pierced our hearts—yet to all this we are indifferent, insensible, and seem intent only on the present vexation, the future disappointment. . . . I can easily, by stooping over the long-spent grass and clay-cold clods, recall the tufts of primroses, or purple hyacinths, that formerly grew on the same spot, and cover the bushes with leaves and singing birds, as they were eighteen summers ago; or, prolonging my walk and hearing the sighing gale rustle through a tall, straight wood at the end of it, can fancy I distinguish the cry of hounds, and the fatal group issuing from it, as in the tale of Theodore and Honoria.

Between this and the exclamation wrung from the chronicler of "Remembrance of Things Past" when he realizes that the unknown people whom his mistress had known have been brought into his heart, what a distance has been traversed—"Now the knowledge that I had of them was internal, immediate, spasmodic, painful. Love, what is it but space and time rendered perceptible by the heart." Between Hazlitt and Proust are all those intellectual movements which have culminated in the discoveries of Einstein in the physical world and Freud in the psychological world, there is the work of Stendhal and Dostoievsky in the novel, there are the creations of the modern composers and the modern painters. The theme that Hazlitt glanced at has been worked out, not with the background of some village retreat such as the English essayist had in mind, but with that of the most sophisticated of modern cities, it has been illustrated, not with that slightness of knowledge that, relatively speaking, was Hazlitt's, but with the richness possessed by a modern student who knows, not only the European and classical worlds, but the world of modern organization and technique and the re-discovered and re-valued achievements of ancient civilizations and archaic societies. His metaphors come out of this inclusive culture. This is the way he illustrates the effect produced upon him by one of his mistresses' statements:

> I had in the course of my life developed in the opposite direction to those races which make use of phonetic writing only after regarding the letters of the alphabet as a set of symbols; I, who for so many years had sought for the real life and thought of other people only in the direct statements with which they furnished me of their own free will, failing these had come to attach importance, on the contrary, only to the evidence that is not a rational and analytical expression of the truth.

One cannot say of "The Captive," which is the sixth part of "Remembrance of Things Past," that it is less successful, less of an achievement, than any of the parts which are before it. But I think it is the part that will be the least frequently read. There are too many pages that are just the analysis of one particular feeling and so give us the sense of con-

* THE CAPTIVE. By MARCEL PROUST. Translated by C. K. SCOTT MONCRIEFF. New York. Albert and Charles Boni. 1929. $3.

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finement. Indeed, through the whole book we have a sense of being shut in; we do not get out of doors as we do in "Swann's Way" when the loveliness of the bush of blossoming hawthorn is before us, or "In a Budding Grove" when we are brought upon the beach where the little band of young girls parade themselves. The only time when the world of "The Captive" opens out into anything spacious is at that historic party given by the Verdurins when the music of the old composer, Vinteuil, is being played.

Again, although it seems like mentioning that the court of King Lear was lacking in family piety compared with the court of Queen Victoria, "The Captive" has little moral quality, and, for that reason suffers some diminution in interest. Take the chapter in which is related the death of the novelist, Bergotte. I have no doubt but that Marcel Proust intended to make this a very memorable chapter; there is a story about his revising it on his own death-bed so as to give it the actuality of his own experience. The death of the writer in a gallery to which he had gone to have a view of a picture that represented to him some consummation of his own art should be impressive. And it would be impressive if Bergotte had been endowed with some heroic, that is to say, some moral quality. But we are made to think of him as of some sickly satyr.

> He was generous above all towards women—girls, one ought rather to say—who were ashamed to receive so much in return for so little. . . . And so Bergotte said to himself, "I am spending more than a multi-millionaire would spend upon girls, but the pleasures or disappointments they give me make me write a book which brings me money." Economically this argument was absurd, but no doubt he found some charm in thus transmuting gold into caresses and caresses into gold.

This method, however delightful for Bergotte, does not lead us to suppose that his books were full of great creations as are those of the novelists whom Proust thinks well of—Dostoievsky and Thomas Hardy.

* * *

All normal people, I imagine, have some curiosity about the lives of people whose sexual life does not belong to the norm. In "The Cities of the Plain," and again in "The Captive," Marcel Proust gives us ample data on that subject. But in the excursions through Sodom and Gomorrah that he brings us upon, we are not so much appalled as worn out. We weary of the Baron's dissertations, and Albertine's affairs, deduced or suspected, have a like tiring repetition. What a society, the moralist will exclaim, and what a judgment upon Christian civilization there is in the fact that vices which we thought of as belonging to a pagan past should have to have such large account taken of them by a historian of our day! Old men and young girls—hordes of them, apparently—live the lives and think the thoughts of Sodom and Gomorrah! What advance have we made, then, towards a general dignity in life since Petronius wrote "The Satyricon?"

But no sooner do we formulate this question than we see that our centuries of Christian civilization count for something even in the Cities of the Plain. Charlus is not hard, Albertine is not hard as their pagan prototypes were hard. The Baron can be kind; he can be hurt through his affections, and he has moments when he can forgive the greatest injury that has been done him. And Albertine, for all her lies, for all her vices, is able to enter a world of poetry and music, and to appreciate intellectual ideas—she has this much of spiritual life. Apparently the moral and intellectual capital that our civilization has laid by is still large enough not to be seriously impaired by the Charluses and the Albertines who are in every metropolis, and the dreadful rabble whom we glimpse just below them.

* * *

"The Captive" continues the theme that is made so pregnant, so absorbing in the previous parts of this great work—the theme of ever-transforming Time. In a sense, all the personages in "Remembrance of Things Past" are representatives of this mysterious, this dominating entity. To know any one of them is to be made to realize how Time is ever changing that entity which is oneself. Albertine is not only mistress and captive, but she is always suggesting the measure of that motion which has changed, and which is everlastingly changing, everything to which the chronicler has attached himself. She exists that he may realize that love is space and time rendered perceptible to the heart. "I might, if I chose," he thinks,

> take Albertine upon my knee, take her head in my hands; I might caress her, passing my hands slowly over her, but, just as if I had been handling a stone which encloses the salt of immemorial oceans or the light of a star, I felt that I was touching no more than the sealed envelope of a person who inwardly reached to infinity . . . urging me with a cruel and fruitless pressure to remembrance of the past, she resembled, if anything, a mighty Goddess of Time.

As he watches her he knows that Albertine's beauty has been moulded by her memories; these memories, when he tries to seize upon them, carry him back into the past, back into his own past which he is ever trying to realize.

> Then this beauty which, when I thought of the various years in which I had known Albertine, whether upon the beach at Balbec or in Paris, I found that I had but recently discovered in her, and which consisted in the fact that my mistress was developing upon so many planes and embodied so many past days, this beauty became almost heartrending. Then beneath that blushing face I felt that there yawned like a gulf the inexhaustible expanse of evenings when I had not known Albertine.

It is not only his captive who embodies memories that bring back the past of the hero of "Remembrance of Things Past"; Charlus embodies them also; Morel embodies them, and the Verdurins—the furniture in the Verdurins' drawing-room, recalling the times when Swann of the earlier parts of the book met Odette amongst such pieces, brings back the past, and, above all, Vinteuil's music played at the Verdurin's, brings it poignantly back. The people in the book, being creatures of Time, are being always transformed. None of them can be condemned, for in all of them there is some element that in the course of the transformations that Time works in them arouses our pity or our affection. Proust writes about them all and writes about himself without any sense of shame. In the 'nineties a cult was made of unashamedness, but the unashamedness, for instance, of a George Moore was not disinterested, so to speak, as is Proust's: they wrote partly out of a desire to shock the middle-classes and partly out of an exhibitionism which an understanding of modern psychology, perhaps, would have checked. But Proust does not want to shock people, nor to parade an infantile complex. He has been an invalid and he has, perhaps, assimilated his way of thinking, his expression, to the practitioners of the clinic for whom it is natural to speak of things hidden below our normal lives. He has the candor, too, of a man at his life's last confession—he is a dying man confessing to himself. His candor and his kindliness prevent our being greatly shocked by the people he presents to us. He does not scold, he does not satirize, he does not deliberately vilify. These men and women who so malform their lives have all memories of a world in which there was kindliness, uprightness, gentleness, good manners—the world of which the artists Bergotte, the novelist, Vintenil, the composer, and Elstir, the painter, have been able to make record. Perhaps that was their native world, and perhaps they are on their way back to it. Meanwhile we are the creatures and the victims of Time, and if anyone judges us he should judge us tolerantly. This does not mean that Marcel Proust is always the philosopher in his writing about the men and women of his world. Fortunately he is not. He is a gossip who has been made over into a philosopher, and his gossip about Charlus, Swann, Morel, the Verdurins' set, is incisive and circumstantial.

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A census recently taken in France shows that in the last nine years the production of new books has more than doubled. In 1920 the number was 6,315; last year it was 13,619, an increase of 7,304. In the same period the output in England increased from 11,004 to 14,399, including reprints. The latter figure was the highest ever reached in that country, but it is likely to be exceeded this year. It was exceeded in France in 1925, when the total was 15,054. But that was an isolated effort, the reason for which is not clear.

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The original manuscript of "Deutschland über Alles," the German national anthem, was sold at an auction sale in London to a foreign buyer for £3 13s. The MS. was in the handwriting of Hoffmann von Fallersleben, who wrote it in 1841 while staying on the island of Heligoland, then a British possession.

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"Alice in Wonderland" and "Through the Looking Glass" have recently been translated for the first time into German. They were published in Vienna.

# The New Consumer

SELLING MRS. CONSUMER. By Mrs. Christine Frederick. New York: The Business Bourse. 1929. $5.

OUR BIGGEST CUSTOMER. By George Harrison Phelps. New York: Horace Liveright. 1929. $2.

THE USEFUL ART OF ECONOMICS. By George Soule. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1929. $2.

Reviewed by Ordway Tead

THE consumer is the new center of interest in economic analysis. The forces which have speeded up production have made it inevitable that what goods people are going to want, rather than how economically they can be made, is the problem of the hour—and I suspect of the decade. The consequences of this shift of emphasis have of course their most direct bearing on the task of all who forward the processes of merchandizing. And it is inevitable that forward-looking writers for a business audience should embroider this theme variously.

We have had Goode and Powel, Shibley, Chase, Mazur, Javitts, Borsodi,—to name only the outstanding. And now comes Mrs. Frederick to tell of the special problems faced by those who sell to women,—they being in fact probably over eighty per cent of the buying group for a majority of ultimate consumer items. This book is a worthy examplar of the new method of scrutinizing the characteristics of buyers and taking from them the cue as to how to find out what and how they will buy. An imposing array of factual matter is assembled which should have considerable value in correcting a too masculine view of the market for consumer goods and of how to reach it.

* * *

Mr. Phelps also bespeaks attention for a special group of consumers—namely the manual laborers. Writing as an advertising agent, he is reminding all employers of labor as well as all merchandisers of goods, that the lowest income group in our country, constituting over eighty per cent of the population, has, despite its low relative buying power per family, a greater absolute consuming ability today than ever before. And he urges that great attention be paid both to sustaining high and higher earning power and to meeting the new wants of this tremendous class by intelligent selling. His treatment of the newest aspects of this valid theme is highly suggestive and adds an underscoring to the familiar work of Foster and Catchings, at least as to part of his message. To think of manual workers as the major market for goods, not merely as a vaguely upreaching class whose demand for "higher wages and shorter hours" seems to the outsider a constant plaint, is a wholesome corrective. It makes one hope that maufacturers the country over will digest this tract and see a new light.

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Mr. Soule, on the other hand, essays a somewhat broader and more disinterested task. He is writing to show that economics is not correctly viewed as a dismal science, teaching that every worker is in that phase in the economic scheme whereunto it has pleased God to call him. This book bears importantly on the new consumer theme, in that it shows that economics is not a static description of inevitable and circumscribed relations, but is rather an emergent and manipulable art of controlling forces of production and distribution which stand today as the result of distinctly human and evolving efforts.

By an intensive but popular treatment of special topics like the agricultural problem, mass production, the tariff, and others, he shows that our life is not predetermined but controllable. He is confident that goods can be made for man and not submerge him as they pour forth. Economics can be made a useful art, is the contention. And while not new to the student, this contention should be welcomed by the business man and general consumer as a counsel of hope. The problems of social control that have to be solved if economic life is to contribute to well-being are outlined, and possible trends suggested. It is all brief and suggestive. One judges that the author is here only sketching a larger book which he may propose later to present. Mr. Soule owes this to the many admirers of his scholarship, vision, and balance. Study of this profounder sort looks beyond the more utilitarian purpose of the first two volumes here described.

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# William Jennings Bryan

THE PEERLESS LEADER: William Jennings Bryan. By PAXTON HIBBEN. Introduction by CHARLES A. BEARD. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1929. $5.

Reviewed by WILLIAM MACDONALD

PAXTON HIBBEN lived to complete only twenty-one chapters of his life of Bryan. The subject offered him the possibility, not, perhaps, of a crowning achievement, for he was still in his prime when he died, but at least of a work which, more than any other he had written, should deal in a large way with a striking personality and an epoch-making period in American history. He spared neither labor nor expense in gathering his material, nor time and thought in endeavoring to evaluate it. If he had any prepossessions when he began, they had no weight against facts and reflection. The nine chapters which Mr. C. Hartley Grattan has added to complete the book carry on, as well as another hand could, the style and manner and detailed thoroughness of what Hibben had already accomplished; so well, indeed, that the average reader, if he did not stop to read the publishers' brief note of explanation and acknowledgment, would hardly notice where the one part left off and the other began.

* * *

The method of the book, as far as the use of authorities goes, resembles closely that which the late Senator Beveridge applied in his fragmentary life of Lincoln. We have a minute investigation of the details of Bryan's life, a careful following up of legends and stories, a rigorous testing of what others have written, and a frank disregard of accepted judgments not supported by indubitable facts. Looked at from the standpoint of the critic there should be, perhaps, no special praise for this beyond what is due to intelligent industry, since the least that is to be expected of a biographer is that he shall know what he is writing about. The main interest of such an accomplishment, however, for those who are not content merely with a verified record of details, is the picture of the man and his age which such a study enables a biographer to draw. At this point the book is a remarkable performance. The "peerless leader" retains his peerlessness, but only in the vivid contrast between the popular influence that he exercised and his intellectual shallowness, between his eloquent appeals for righteousness and his own indifference to certain moral considerations, between his cloak of public spirit and his eye for the main chance.

Bryan grew to manhood in an atmosphere which might well have overcome a stronger character than his. His boyhood was set in "a world of women," and a robust masculinity his mind never had. He looked forward to becoming a Baptist preacher until he witnessed a Baptist immersion; then a revival swept him into the Presbyterian fold and the "realm of fantasy" in which he thereafter lived. His father was a distinguished Democrat, and politics was as much a part of life as the daily bread, but what the young Bryan absorbed was the politics of an adolescent period that followed the Civil War, when the Democrats were groping for issues and a Granger revolt was seeking salvation through the destruction of the "money power." It would have been hard for any one to gather much strength from these surroundings, but Bryan was further handicapped by a genuine gift of oratory and a consuming ambition for prominence, office, and applause. His college life was, on the whole, a negligible episode, and the practice of law only a step on the political ladder which he set himself to climb.

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It was by oratory that Bryan burst into public life, and by oratory quite as much as by anything else that he made his way. There is no gainsaying the beauty and richness of his voice at its best, his striking presence, his resounding rhetoric, his magnetic control of an audience, or his keen perception of the proper moment at which to bring himself forward. There is no parallel in our history to the influence which he wielded from the platform, and his sheer physical vitality amazed his friends and his enemies alike. We have never had such political campaigns as those in which he was the central or all but central figure. It is when we turn from the oratorical form to the substance of what was said, from the parade or tumult of the battle to the principles that were at stake, that the tinsel thinness of Bryan's leadership becomes apparent. The biography now published is a masterly dissection of Bryan's intellectual quality and his vaunted skill and farsightedness as a popular leader. His attack on the Wilson tariff bill, in 1892, was pronounced by Champ Clark "the greatest and most brilliant speech he ever delivered," but it was a *post mortem* effort as far as free trade was concerned, for protection was in the saddle and destined to ride. Bryan was a subsidized spokesman for the silver interests when he championed the visionary doctrine of free coinage of silver as a specific for the people's ills; he was a paid lecturer at $250 and expenses per speech when he helped the Anti-Saloon League foist prohibition upon the country; he was a defender of an antique theology and a last-ditch Christianity when he labored in the Scopes trial to destroy freedom of teaching in American colleges and schools.

At only one moment of his public career does Bryan now seem to merit lasting and grateful remembrance. That was when, as Secretary of State, he initiated the arbitration treaties that bear his name. Elsewhere, he either gave himself to what, politically speaking, paid, or else backed and filled.

MARCEL PROUST
From a drawing by Scheel.

His bitter fight with President Cleveland was clouded by his own obvious hope of succeeding to Cleveland's place. When, after his first and greatest campaign, he failed of the presidency, he appeared willing to disrupt the Democratic party or send it straight to defeat rather than abandon his hope of dictating a platform or the choice of a candidate, and he hung as a dead weight upon his party long after his tangible following had faded away. It was to his credit that he should have opposed the course of President Wilson in leading the country toward war with Germany when he himself was opposed to war and believed that it might be avoided; but his protest, like that of the intellectuals with whom he had no other link, went for nothing when, after the die was cast, he supported the war. It was always with him, the main chance that counted: the chance to hold office, the chance to win popular applause, the chance to be in the limelight, the chance to dictate what others should or should not do. One would like to believe that he was deceived, as were so many others, by the superficial appearances of soundness in populism and free silver, or that he was always at heart an enemy of privilege and a friend of the common man, but history does not accept such extenuations in the face of such a record as his biographers have here set down.

It should not at all be inferred, from what has been said of the Bryan picture, that the authors of this biography have undertaken to pillory Bryan either as a politician or as a man. They have quite clearly attempted nothing of the kind. Here and there, in the Hibben part of the book, are some keen thrusts and incisive characterizations to suggest that Hibben, as his material unfolded the story, felt too keenly the inconsistencies and ineptitudes of Bryan's career to withhold pungent comment. To this impulse, if it was really his, a vivacious and picturesque style, well adapted to the description of lively episodes, naturally lends its aid. The outstanding excellence of the book, however, is its straightforward and exhaustive presentation of the facts of Bryan's life. The book will give no joy to those who still like to think of Bryan as a great man, and not much to those who affect to believe that the political movements which Bryan acclaimed or led represent some real advance in the direction of a sensible national life But it is not the mission of biography to make any one out either small or great, or to single out and emphasize a hopeful tone. The only mission of biography is to tell the truth.

# Negro Life and Lore

BLACK ROADWAYS. By MARTHA WARREN BECKWITH. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 1929. $3.

JOHN HENRY. By GUY B. JOHNSON. The same. $2.

Reviewed by NEWBELL NILES PUCKETT

ETHNOGRAPHICAL zeal prevents Miss Beckwith from leaving her readers ignorant of how the Jamaican Negro plants his yams, traps birds, and shapes his baskets, but the folklorist enthusiasm before evidenced in her "Jamaica Anasi Stories" and other sketches of peasant Jamaica easily saves her from the path of dry and dusty trivialities. Not only is over half the book frankly devoted to that ever-absorbing potpourri of ghosts, obeah, graveyard etiquette, freakish religious sects, and folk art, but even the mundane routine of fishing, cutting trees, or building houses is richly spiced with signs, omens, and superstitions.

Close acquaintances of the rural American Negro (or the rural Englishman, for that matter) will recognize many old friends in this miscellany of folk custom. A gift of a knife or a pair of scissors "cuts" Jamaican love as readily as it does Mississippi love; a baby born with a caul has the power of seeing duppies; if an addition is made to the house after it is built some member of the family will die. The familiar witch who slipped out of her skin and returned to find it full of pepper roams on in Jamaica in the person of "Old Hige." Jamaican obeah, although more elaborate, parallels at least in general pattern the voodoo or hoodoo of America, and in both localities the frizzled chicken is highly valued because of its supposed ability to locate and scratch up devilment buried against a person by some enemy. Myalism with its close affinity for obeah smacks much more of West Africa than do any of the colored sects of America, but the "Revivalists," finding literal Biblical sanction for annointing with oil and sprinkling healing water, and the Pukkumerians, specializing in spirit-raisings and "unknown tongues," have at least partial American ritualistic counterparts. In our own rural South many Negro congregations are still enraptured by that heritage of shout-to-glory emotionalism from pioneer Methodist and Baptist days, but in general their Jamaican relatives seem to an extent dignified and sobered by the more orderly pattern set by the Anglican Church. The author exhibits no trace of distortion for the sake of sensationalism in this well-balanced and interesting analysis of Jamaican lore. An adequate bibliography, index, and numerous photographs add much to the value of the book.

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In radical contrast to Miss Beckwith's portrayal of folk life through hundreds of beliefs and customs smoothly woven into a continuous strand is Dr. Johnson's study of the folk mind of the American Negro through a concentrated analysis of a single negro character, the much sung-of John Henry. From the King Arthur of knighthood days to the Steamboat Bill of the river folk or the Paul Bunyan of the lumber camps the ideals, yearnings, and ambitions of a group have found reflections in their folk heroes. With the Negro during slavery days hero lore seemed mostly animalized. In Brer Rabbit's many victories over more powerful animals the slave may perhaps have found an indirect outlet for yearnings which he dared not express openly. Where their hero worship included a powerful master or a slave of outstanding sagacity contacts and communication were so restricted that such reverence usually extended at most only to a few contiguous plantations.

Today, however, the Negroes sing freely of roustabouts and various bad men, including the supersexual Uncle Bud, but it is significant that "their greatest idol and hero is not an all-round desperado but a sober steel driver." The fame of John Henry is sung in every part of the negro United States, most often by wanderers and laborers "who could

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tell three times as much about John Henry as they could about Booker T. Washington." Even in Jamaica, according to a version recorded by Miss Beckwith, his "ten pound hammer" has rung out to the doleful refrain of "Somebody dying every day."

The trail of this Ethiopian Thor who "died with his hammer in his hand" after beating the newly invented steam drill in open contest, has led Dr. Johnson into organizing John Henry contests in Negro schools and colleges; to John Henry advertisements in the Negro press; to personal investigation at the Big Bend Tunnel, the supposed scene of his demise; even to historical studies of the date of introduction and early efficiency of the steam drill. Of the material assembled some eleven work song versions and thirty or more ballad versions of John Henry, many of them with musical arrangements, are included in the present collection. Every available shred of evidence has been carefully dissected not only for data regarding the authenticity of the legend, but also to show the extent and method of its diffusioin, the various alterations and additions, and its relation to other similar legends. Especially is new material brought to bear upon the identity of John Henry with John Hardy assumed by Professor Cox.

In spite of the tedious painstaking care and patience required in getting together and classifying this most complete of all John Henry collections, Dr. Johnson has worked in much of human interest and demonstrated clearly that he is "not one of those who believe that folklore studies must be dull in order to be scientific." If the author has not been wholly successful in demonstrating "what the John Henry Legend means to the Negro" it may be ascribed to general undevelopment in the social sciences rather than to lack of zeal on his own part. The expedient of citing such and such qualities as appealing "to something fundamental in the heart of the common man" reveals the universal lack of a definite measuring rod for checking off the vagaries of public opinion. Perhaps continued dissections of folk life will discover with exactitude just what there is about a particular culture pattern that forces members of that group into adopting one certain legend in preference to some other. Or may we in time expect that millennium when one may accurately predict in advance the popularity appeal of any new offering, be it fiction, song, or shaving-soap?

## On Reading Biographies

(*Continued from page* 337)

and incidents; yet this imagination must be strictly controlled by the available facts, and these must be tirelessly assembled. The public library type of biography is usually a clever deduction from whatever the author can find in a hurry to fit the "new portrait" of Napoleon or Washington or Cleopatra that he has been hired to make.

A good biography cannot be impersonal and probably can never be unprejudiced. Men cold enough to write without bias are not warm enough to interpret their discoveries. Yet it must not be propaganda for sets of ideas (like many of the biographies of Jefferson, Hamilton, and Jackson in American history). In other words, a good biography must be intellectually honest. Macaulay's Whiggish biographies are honest, though certainly not unprejudiced. "Family lives" and campaign histories often lack integrity as well as impartiality. Smart books of scandal that set up as biographies are dishonest in another way; their authors would sacrifice Plato or Christ to make a sensation.

At least half of the biographies now being published violate one or more of these precepts. And more than half cover their nakedness as history by the garment of fluent writing. To the remainder all praise. They are sound without being dull, clever without falsification, novel without straining for effect, and, on the whole, the best reading we have had in the last few years. Good readers should help to protect them and the taste for biography, by insisting that when they buy a biography they get a biography, and not a bottle of acid, a warmed-over pie, or a cake of soap.

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John Galsworthy has written a new play, which will shortly be produced in London. It is entitled "The Roof," and is described as a "modern comedy of character."

## Plain, Unvarnished Truth

GOD HAVE MERCY ON US! By WILLIAM T. SCANLON. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1929. $2.50.

Reviewed by LEONARD H. NASON
Author of "Sergeant Eadie"

THE writer of this review opened the above novel with mixed feelings. The jacket informed him that it was the novel that won a prize offered for the best war novel, or rather that it won the prize for "one of the best."* He was eager to read it to see what it was like. The jacket likewise informed him that the author was a marine. This would indicate that the book would be another testimonial to the effective help the United States Marines gave God in winning the late war. It's all right, however. The publishers wrote the jacket, but the author thank God, wrote the book.

I think we'd better drop the third person for a minute here, and the editorial "we" and so forth. I write war books myself, and it is a little difficult for me to judge a competitor's production with the impartiality that I would judge a sex novel. On the other hand, a reviewer is supposed to give his frank opinion of the book in question regardless of who wrote it or what field it covers, and the people who read that opinion must have confidence in the reviewer's good faith. I do not know Mr. Scanlon, but he has written a true book, and I believe, as marines go, that he is a likable young man. The book is not a novel, it is the war as Mr. Scanlon saw it, from the time he left Meaux in June, 1918 until the Armistice, when his division was before Sedan. It is a plain, unvarnished narration of events, with no attempt at plot.

After all, what plot does a man need who writes about war? I believe that this type of novel will continue to be written and sold and read for years to come, an indefinite number of years, until we have another war. Even after that, perhaps. How valuable would not a book be that was written as "God Have Mercy on Us" was written, by a legionary of Julius Cæsar's, or by one of the Ten Thousand? Who knows what those men felt about the battle, what they had to eat, how they slept, if they plundered the dead, and what they found on them?

Mr. Scanlon's book compares favorably with that other great epic of the Marine Corps, "Fix Bayonets." But just as "Fix Bayonets" is obviously the work of an officer, with faint but unsuccessful attempts to reproduce the enlisted man's mental processes, so is "God Have Mercy On Us" obviously the work of an enlisted man with the same lack of success in understanding the officer. Mr. Scanlon is no writer. His story tells itself, so that he doesn't need to be, but there are places where one can see where patching has been done, and the mark of erasure and rewriting and sweating of blood is quite plain. There was a guiding hand somewhere there; I'll bet. And I'll bet the guiding hand chose the title. I don't like it. I never heard the words used, and my old outfit was in just as hot scraps as the Marines ever were, and a lot hotter too, which is the reason the said Marines hogged all the credit for them.

Some of this book is great stuff to read in bed at night if you want something to put you to sleep, but some of it is extremely pleasant. Mr. Scanlon puts two National Guard Divisions in their places by saying that they ran away, and telling when and where. I am glad he did this, for this is a new note. Our citizen soldiery was not supposed to have run away, but to have saved the world for democracy. I cannot testify to the truth of the two mentioned in "God Have Mercy On Us," but several that I saw seemed to be yearning for their home, wherever it was they came from, and going in that direction at a rate that would bring them there, or to the seacoast, at an early hour. The author also describes the visit of a popular actress who showed her drawers and had a spotlight turned on her to prove she had on *almost* nothing and then sent five or six thousand soldiers back to their barbed wire stockades to think it over. What would the folks at home have thought about *that* for their Christian soldiers?

So then, if you want to read about war, and see how the soldiers thought, and be bored at times as they were, and excited at other times as they were, read "God Have Mercy on Us." But you won't get the thrill out of it you got out of "All Quiet on the Western Front," because "God Have Mercy on Us" is the truth.

* This chronicle by Mr. Scanlon, and the one by Miss Lee reviewed in the next column, divided the prize offered by the Houghton Mifflin Company and the *American Legion Monthly* for the best war novel.

## More of the Truth*

IT'S A GREAT WAR. By MARY LEE. Boston: Houghton Mifflin & Co. 1929.

Reviewed by FREDERIC J. KEPPEL
Director Foreign Operations, A. R. C., 1919-'20

"IT's a Great War" is an American woman's picture of the years from 1917 to 1920. The story is that of a New England girl just out of college who goes over as a clerk with a hospital unit which marks time at Bordeaux; she transfers to a job in an army office in Paris, no more satisfactory to her ardent spirit. Then comes incidental volunteer care of the wounded soldiers and a switch to a post as Y girl at a flying field near the front. She follows the soldiers to Germany with the army of occupation. Then comes the reluctant return to the United States and the attempt to fit in to a world determined to have normalcy.

Though cast in the form of fiction, Miss Lee's work is really a sermon; she wants the world to know what war does not only to men's bodies but to their souls. She has apparently been waiting for ten years for some one to tell the brutal truth as she has seen it regarding the officers of the A. E. F. (or some of them) and has finally done the job herself. It is not a pretty picture, this account of the love making propensities of a long series of American officers and gentlemen. Let us hope it is somewhat exaggerated and that Ann Wentworth's experiences were not wholly typical. No one at all familiar with the facts can deny, however, that between the training camp at home with its high powered idealism and the realities of the front line, many an officer who went to France cut a pretty sorry figure, and that he has been shielded since then by something like a conspiracy of silence.

As a story, the action goes forward as a series of brief episodes interspersed here and there with longer sections. The interest is well maintained, and the book is readable from cover to cover. Miss Lee has evidently a sharp ear, a clear eye, and perhaps most important in giving a sense of reality, a discerning nose. She has caught the idiom of the enlisted man as well as his profanity, and she makes one see town and camp and country side in France and Germany, and certainly she makes one smell them. It isn't the attempt of a woman to write like a man. Both in her choice of episodes and in her treatment of them, her book is wholly feminine; not of the Victorian order but of the clear-eyed young person of the new order, who can call a spade a spade even if she is a bit self-conscious about spelling out the letters.

Miss Lee follows the time-honored method of giving the feel of the alien tongue by putting the English words in the foreign order, touched up by an occasional phrase in French or German as the case may be. She does it pretty well, but the effect is marred by footnotes translating a few, and only a few, of the foreign phrases, and usually the less difficult ones.

The book may prove to be too long to get the attention it deserves. It might have been better to have the story finish when Ann Wentworth turns homeward. The later chapters deal, and deal intelligently, with the strife between the old generation and the new, made more vivid, of course, by the war experiences of the latter, but this has been done equally well by others, whereas her contribution to our records of the A. E. F. is unique.

However, Miss Lee has done her own job in her own way, and an honest and finely sustained piece of work it is.

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## THE PINK MURDER CASE

By S. S. VEENDAM

Author of the "Green," "Canary," Mauve," and "Beige Murder Cases"

### CHAPTER I

THE HOUSE ON THE MARSH

(*Tuesday, February* 22, 1732; 1 *A. M.*)

AMONG all the vari-colored murder cases from which Philo Pants has derived his reputation and I my income during the last few years, certainly there was none more horrifying, nor, in its outcome, more astounding than the Pink one.

My friend Pants was, as I have often written, a young social aristocrat with carefully chiselled features, especially a fine, hand-engraved, aquamarine nose. His conversation was the most completely satisfying I have ever known. No one ever felt the need of a second dose.

He was a close friend of Barker,† the District Attorney, who entrusted to him the most interesting murder cases, much to my profit, since thus the murderer was given time to kill a whole book-full of people,‡ which is really necessary nowadays to keep the reader's interest. So it was that the frightful Pink holocaust was made possible. Pants had been for several days immersed in a Coptic translation of Schizzenheimer's "Nuovi Studi de la Physiologie des Heisshundes." He could not read Coptic, but was trying to decide which was the right side up of the fascinating volume, when Barker came in.

"A new murder for you, Pants," said Barker gloomily.

"Oh, I say, don't y' know, eh what?" drawled Pants. "How dashed amusin'. Most intriguin' and all that sort of thing. I could bear to hear about the bally homicide, old bean, don't y' know."

Barker frowned, glowered, and gritted his teeth. Pants's parts of speech always had this effect on him.

"It's a Pink case this time," he grumbled. "They're bad enough plain, but when they come in colors they're devilish. Some day a Scotch plaid will turn up and finish me."

"Who's the jolly old victim of the distressin' crime? My flutterin' heart's anguished to know."

Barker tore his hair and spat through his teeth grudgingly. "Alonzo Pink," he said, with biting sarcasm.

"I say, y' know, you don't say so," drawled Pants. "Old pal of mine. Spent last evenin' with him, discussin' terra cotta ornamentation of renaissance patisseries and all that. Dead, eh? Amusin' predicament, eh what?"

"Know any other Pinks?" asked Barker in a rage.

"Whole dashed lot, Citronella and Palooka, sisters, Hercules, brother, contemp'ry offspring of heredit-ry sire, old Paresis Pink, bally old blighter."

"Come along, then," gargled Barker furiously.

### CHAPTER II

SHRIEKS IN THE NIGHT

(*Tuesday, December* 25, 1929; 3 *A. M.*)

THE Pink mansion stood on Broadway three blocks south of the Battery, a gloomy pile, embowered in funereal yews and gaunt weeping willows. A foreboding of woe came over me as we neared its ghastly portal.

Snoot, the butler, admitted us. A man of more sinister aspect I have never seen. He had but one eye on each side of his nose and his mouth was practically horizontal. In a sepulchral voice, he told us he had found Alonzo dead in his bedroom, shot through the head, and that all the doors and windows were locked on the inside. A Colt .32 lay by his side. Then he took us to the chamber of death.

"Oh, I say, my word!" drawled Pants. "How dashed amusin'!"

"What?" barked Barker.

"Don't notice anything funny, eh? Of course, you wouldn't. Why, man, the jolly old corpse is standin' on its head."

And so it was, but only the quick eye of Philo Pants had marked the fact.

"Now," drawled Pants, "we'll interview the caressin' family."

Citronella Pink met us in the library. She was gently but firmly dressed in a jade green bathing suit, a brown bowler, and white spats. She was a beautiful woman, but something about her made me think of either Lucrezia Borgia or Lizzie Borden or both.

"Ever do any shootin', Citronella?" drawled Pants.

"Lots," she said nonchalantly, whipping out a Colt .32.

"Ever shoot Alonzo?"

"Don't you wish you knew?" she said teasingly. "Ask Herc, he knows."

We found Hercules and his sister, Palooka, in the garage. They were shooting at each other with .32 Colts, but, as he had a hare-lip and St. Vitus's dance and she was cockeyed, neither had hit the other. Pants turned to Barker.

"Think I'll take on this amusin' pair after dinner," he drawled. "Give the servants jolly old once over now."

The entire staff was paraded for inspection. They all looked like jailbirds, and it was, indeed, found that they all were. Suspicion having thus been satisfactorily distributed, Pants dismissed Barker. "Run along, old fruit," he drawled. "I'll carry on with silly old Veendam."

### CHAPTER III

GHOULS AND VAMPIRES

(*Thursday, April* 1, 1066; 4 *A. M.*)

AT 9:30 the next morning Pants, in purple velvet pajamas, was sipping his cognac as he idly turned the leaves of an illuminated copy of Teufelsdrockh's "Ichweissnicht Wassolles Bedeutendass Ichsotraurigbin," when our phone rang.

"Barker speaking," said an agitated voice. "Pink case again. Palooka and Hercules found dead in rooms. Doors and windows all locked inside. Colt .32 by side each. Come at once. Mother."

"How deuced annoyin'," drawled Pants. "Must go around to jolly old slaughter-house again."

We met Barker there. "Undoubtedly an inside job," said he, "though it probably started outside. Ku-Klux, I think, with a dash of Mafia and a sprinkling of Paprika. By their fingerprints I've identified Snoot as the late Belle Boyd, the Beautiful Rebel Spy, and the parlor maid as Jesse James."

Pants looked at him with pained surprise. "Listen, Barker," he said earnestly. "There's something terrible going on here. Can't you feel it? In this lonely old mansion—poor thing!—polluted with a miasma of corrupt and rotting ambitions, black hatreds, hideous impulses, rheumatism, catarrh, coughs, colds, and indigestion—in this loathly mansion three bozos have been bumped off. Deuced amusin', eh what? Must have little old parley-voo with Citronella. Roll along, old egg. Toodle-oo and all that sort of thing."

Gasping with rage, Barker left Philo Pants, the master-mind, to pursue his inquiries.

### CHAPTER IV

RED DARRELL'S REVENGE

(*St. Valentine's Day*, 1444, 5 *A. M.*)

AT 9:30 the following morning Barker again appeared at our apartment. He was accompanied by Detective Bogan† and two policemen. Pants greeted the party with his usual charming insouciance.

"Ah, bobbies, what? Why the parade?"

"New development in the Pink case," said Barker in a tone of forbearance. "Citronella dead as per former plans and specifications."

"Pinks all wiped out, eh?" drawled Pants brightly. "No more cannon-fodder, crime wave will subside."

"Wait a bit," hissed Barker. "I've been studying this case and I've reached certain conclusions. First, these victims were all found dead in locked rooms, shot through heads with .32 calibre bullets and—mark this hitherto disregarded fact—a .32 Colt was found by the side of each! Do you see what that means? I didn't until Bogan told me. It was in each and every case—*suicide.*" His voice sunk to a whisper as he pronounced the unexpected and dreadful word.

"Very well," he went on. "'Why?' I asked Bogan. He answered like a flash—'Bughouse.' A logical working hypothesis, I said to myself. 'Why bughouse?' I asked Bogan. He answered in two words. But before I tell you what they were let me ask you a few questions. Who was with Alonzo Pink the evening before he shot himself? Who questioned Hercules and Palooka the day before their fatal night? Who 'parley-vooed' with Citronella before she shuffled off? The answer is in the two words of the astute Bogan—*Philo Pants!*

"It was you, Pants. Your blithering blah, your musical-comedy English accent drove these people mad, made them fly for relief to self-destruction. You are their murderer. And you, Veendam, were not only his wretched accomplice in this case, but your books, disseminating his words, have sowed the seeds of madness in many homes. Arrest these men!"

As the cops stepped forward, Philo Pants lightly laughed and, unscrewing the tip of his aquamarine nose, took from a cavity within two pellets.

"Catch, old dear," he drawled, as he tossed one to me. "Sorry to disappoint, old fruit," he said to Barker. "It's dashed distressin', but must say toodle-oo and all that sort of thing."

Then together we swallowed the pellets and in a moment we both lay dead upon the floor.

"As usual," said Barker resignedly, "cyanide of potassium."

CHRISTOPHER WARD.

†George A. ("Gabby") Barker was the most efficient District Attorney of that name New York ever had. After retirement from office, he became a private citizen.

‡The Blue Murder Case (Scribblers, 1929; $2.50).
The Cardinal Murder Case (Scribblers, 1927; $2.50).

†Thomas Aquinas Bogan was first on the scene of the murders of Elwell and Arnold Rothstein and in the Dorothy Arnold disappearance case. He is now raising turtle-doves in Hoboken.

## A Drifter

THE METHODIST FAUN. By ANNE PARRISH. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1929. $2.50.

Reviewed by GRACE FRANK

ANNE PARRISH'S art has deepened. Her touch is as crisp and delicate as ever, but a new undercurrent of sympathy plays about her characterizations and flows, ever so gently, over the shining pebbles of her satire, washing them smooth. Into her acute sense of the futility of her nonentities, there obtrudes in her latest novel a consciousness that even insignificant people may be meet for compassion.

Clifford Hunter, groping, uncertain, most inarticulate when he rushes into speech to reveal himself, is a touching figure despite his weakness and banality. "When he was with people he could never be at his best, because he so desperately wanted to be." It was only when he was idling in the woods, restfully aware of the shapes and colors of trees and streams, or when he was talking to a common little piece of natural scenery like the tawdry Evie, that he lost his primness and became unselfconscious and happy. The sophisticated Cathleen King, upon whom he inflicted his devotion, felt this difference in "the poor little man," as she called him. Once when he talked to her about maidenhair ferns and tropical plants, instead of trying, as usual, to impress her with his culture and knowledge of Freud, she actually found him neither commonplace nor ridiculous, but potentially pagan and exciting.

Most of the time, however, Clifford was unfortunately attempting to be someone that he could never be—a painter, a man of the world, a gay Bohemian, a faun at a Methodist entertainment—and then he ran foul of his limitations, his environment, or of both together. He drifted to New York, where he lost both Cathleen and his hope of being an artist. He drifted home again, where he lost the little liberty that remained to him by walking blindly into a marriage with a seemingly sympathetic but essentially frigid woman whose immaculacy smothered him.

Without Miss Parrish's humorous knowingness, her detached sense of the incongruous, and her shrewd revelation of the pretenses and pretensions of her various "show-offs," Clifford's story might be merely pathetic, his background merely dull. As it is, however, almost every page is quick with comedy, deft flicks of satire, and irrefutable bits of characterization.

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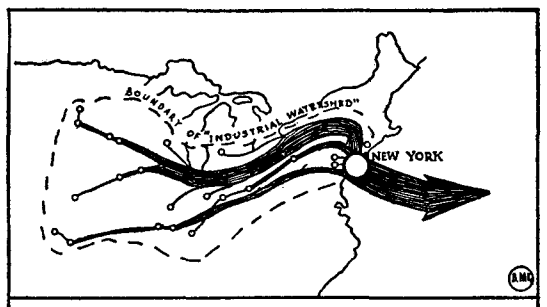
# Our Iron Civilization




· STREAMS OF TRAFFIC ·
*The flow from an "Industrial Watershed" Export tonnage flow passing through New York Harbor.*

Where there is no vision the people perish.
*Proverbs* 29:18.

WITH his index finger pointing to this text, Herbert Hoover on March fourth last took his oath to perform the duties of President of the United States. What text more appropriate for our first engineer President? And what is Mr. Hoover hinting at? Does he refer to his own vision or the people's? How may the people perish—physically or spiritually? Does our chief engineer foresee, like Noah of old, some deluge to be visited upon a short-sighted populace? Is it a deluge of water or some other element? (Iron perhaps?) Is it through the eyes of Noah that Mr. Hoover sees America overwhelmed by what he calls "an agglomeration of factories, of railways, of ships, of dynamos?" Perhaps the President as engineer thinks of some new problem of "flood control" within the eddies of our civilization. Perhaps he foresees a danger of perishing (culturally if not industrially) in a flood of iron instead of water. And this, indeed, is our greatest engineering problem—the protection, on the map of America and the world, of the growth of human culture by dyking the inroads of iron civilization. Can the vision of the engineer control the excesses of science?

What is engineering? Controlling the Mississippi River. This is engineering. And President Hoover is (ultimately) the chief engineer of the project. This is a project in control; the control of a flow; the control of a flow of *water*. The Mississippi River project is a diversion of a flow of water from destructive to constructive ends. It is a diversion—and hence a conversion—of flood waters into navigable waters, and into irrigation waters. It is a conversion ultimately of flood and calamity into navigation and commerce, and irrigation and agricultural produce. It is a guiding of inevitable flow from channels of calamity to those of welfare.

Harnessing Muscle Shoals is another project in controlling a flow—the flow not of water but of *power*. To what ends? (Always the first question of the engineer). The Muscle Shoals project converts water to power by diverting the water from cascade to turbine, and the immediate objective, therefore, is power. But the ultimate ends are something else—light and comfort in the home, a substitute for human physical effort, a load off the back of the housewife and the farmer, a shortening of the day's work, and a lengthening of the day's play. The Muscle Shoals project is a conversion of water into power and of power into leisure.

Cutting the Panama Canal, was another project in controlling a flow—not of water and not of power but of *commodities*. To what ends? The immediate end of saving distance; the ultimate end of securing the blessings of food, clothing, and other useful material in proper distribution to the peoples of the world. The saving of distance was accomplished through the physical cutting of the waterway from ocean to ocean. The final objective, which is the proper control of commodity flow to achieve the blessings of civilization through this particular crossroad, is a longer quest. It presents an engineering problem at once vast and complex, but one which is perfectly definite: to convert decrease of distance into decrease of labor, to make a saving in world industry a releasing of world culture. The chief engineer at present on this job is Mr. Hoover.

Some may object perhaps to the use of the concrete term of "engineering" for commodity flow and its world-wide alliances. Two problems usually embraced in economics do, however, come under engineering. One of these concerns "consumption of goods," which refers merely to such commodities as foods, textiles, household goods, and the million and one material things which clutter up the modern civilized home in America and Western Europe. The other is "capital goods," which refers to the home structure itself as a stationary plant, together with the assemblage of industrial plants—the "factories, railways, ships, and dynamos"—which constitute the outward shell of modern western civilization. Both species of "goods" (or the ingredients thereof) flow through the Panama Canal.

It is the flow of these "capital goods" that forms Mr. Hoover's biggest engineering problem—not alone through Panama and the gateways of the world but within America herself: for this flow once out of hand, would undermine civilization's base and purpose. The flow of "capital goods" (of factories and buildings and gas stations) is intermingled inseparably with the flow of population and the population's culture. Witness the eating stands and tenements, the garages and soap factories which spring up along our American waysides. This combined movement of things and folk is nothing less than the flow itself of a particular species of civilization. Before we can understand this greatest of engineering problems we must better understand the nature of the stream to be controlled.

* * *

This stream is one of blood and iron, of man and mechanism, of population and capital goods. The population is composed of human beings: the goods (regardless of their shapes) are composed of a very few ingredients, the most important of which are iron ore, wood, copper, rubber, coal, and petroleum. Of these *iron ore*, with the needed coal to smelt it, forms the nucleus of the entire composition. Without the other ingredients, to be sure, we do not get the particular civilization to which we have referred; but where iron ore and coal beds lie together—there lie the springs and sources of this civilization. From these sources flow the streams of our "iron civilization." These sources happen to lie in the west (in Europe and America) and so the streams of iron and mechanism spreading from these continents, with their accompanying culture and influence, have come to be known collectively as "Western Civilization."

The coal supply of China is almost as great as that of the United States, but the iron ore reserves of China and all Asia are trivial. The world's greatest single supply of iron ore is found in Brazil, but the coal supplies of South America are negligible. Iron and coal must *go together* to be a source of mechanical civilization. The significance of petroleum as a basis for modern mechanism lies in its convenience and not in its ultimate power; and the main supplies lie close to the western centers—in Baku and in Mexico. If a temperate climate is the key to modern progress, then we find it coincident with the regions of iron and coal, for the most temperate climates occur in western Europe and in the eastern United States.

If the material power of civilization should be measured in terms of all its natural resources, its ores, soils, waters, forests, the relative strengths of the world civilizations would be about as follows: the United States nearly a third of the world's total strength; Western Europe (outside of Russia) about one sixth; China and India, one fifth; the southern hemisphere and the equatorial regions, one fifth. Thus the strength in resources of the United States is about twice that of the whole of Western Europe (including the British Isles); the iron ore supply of the United States is four fifths that of Europe, and the coal supply is three times greater. The flow of the European half of Western civilization is in the hands of many nations: so there is *no* chief engineer. But the flow of the American half is in the hands of one nation—with *one* chief engineer.

Mr. Hoover occupies a strategic position among the world leaders. The office of President of the United States gives the engineering type of mind the most potent single influence over the control of the flow of iron civilization:—and the present incumbent of that office has an engineering mind. To what ends will this mind seek to control this flow? Industrial or cultural? Toward an existence merely, or a complete living? Toward a mechanical expansion only, or a full human growth? Into what molds, concretely, will Mr. Hoover seek to guide the flow of American men and mechanism—of population and capital goods?

I have mentioned projects for molding the flow of civilization already in the public mind which an expert may emphasize as especially worthy, such as Muscle Shoals and the Mississippi River; there is also Boulder Dam and there is the St. Lawrence Waterway. Three of these apply to the flow of water or of water power; the St. Lawrence project would govern the flow also of commodities. All would influence indirectly the flow of American civilization. But there are other projects designed to influence this civilization directly.

ONE of these projects is the recently announced "Regional Plan of New York and Environs" made by the Russell Sage Foundation. This gives the specifications for a definite type and habitat—namely, the metropolitan mold. It suggests lines of least resistance for the present tendencies of metropolitan expansion. It makes no effort to get behind the tendencies themselves and to judge their net effect on human kind. Present flows of goods and population demand certain channels—belt lines subways, vehicular tunnels: hence these channels must be provided without thought of a substitute for the metropolitan mold itself.

This principle of guiding a flow is directly contrary to that employed in guiding the flow of water, where everything but the tendency to run down hill is changed with reference to the effect on mankind. The demand to flow over the waterfall is deliberately curbed and made to seek its outlet through the penstock and the turbine. The tendency for Lake Erie to flow into Lake Ontario is not questioned but its demand to flow via Niagara Falls is definitely checked and could be checkmated.

Another set of projects designed to mold portions of American civilization is well known under the inclusive term of "conservation" and here the principle employed in controlling the flow of water is applied to the flow of development and population. The tendency of population to seek an outlet toward the open lands and the primeval spaces is not to be questioned. But the attempt of real estate developers and other elements in the population to commercialize the primeval setting and reduce its area through inappropriate building is deliberately checked; and the "streams" of metropolitan development along the motor ways crossing a public area are "dyked" and "damned" as literally as the streams which form the Mississippi. A "dam" of this kind occurs on the Mohawk Highway where it crosses the eastern slope of Hoosac Mountain, Massachusetts. This dam consists of a State Forest through which the highway and its stream of motor traffic pass untrammeled; but not the stream of metropolitan agglomeration! No bill-board, dog-stand, tenement, nor factory! Instead the primeval mold and setting is retained. But just outside the Forest, on the top and west side of the range, where the State neglected to purchase a protecting belt, the highway is lined with the typical metropolitan slum. Thus on one side of the mountain the tendency of the metropolitan stream to run wild along its channel is unchecked; but on the other side it is checked deliberately and the stream prevented from intruding within a setting not its own.

* * *

This principle of checking the tendencies of metropolitan flow is being applied in certain sections within the very area itself claimed for New York's metropolitan expansion. The little city of Radburn, near Paterson in New Jersey, being built by the City Housing Corporation, consists of a community unit designed deliberately and successfully to divert the flow of population from Manhattan Island away from its customary metropolitan agglomeration and to lead it into a preconceived mold designed to obtain an organic unit of human contacts. As the flow of civilization is definitely checked in order to

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# by Benton MacKaye

protect and retain a *primeval* setting in the State Forest on the east slope of Hoosac Mountain just so this flow is checked and molded to obtain a *communal* setting in the planned unit of Radburn. Both are cases of "flood control"—the control of the flood of metropolitan civilization (which is but another name for "iron civilization"). On Hoosac Mountain the flow is "dyked"; in Radburn it is "pooled": a primeval setting is obtained in the one case and a communal setting in the other; a "man-to-nature" contact in the one and a "man-to-man" contact in the other.

Indeed there are three basic human contacts provided by a balanced organic civilization:

(1) The man-to-nature contact of the *primeval* environment.

(2) The simple contact of man-to-man, found in the *communal* environment, illustrated in the classic neighborly New England village. The communal center is the basic geographic "cell" of organic civilization.

(3) The compound contact of man-to-man, found in the truly *urban* environment, illustrated in the classic city—ancient Athens, medieval Paris, or nineteenth century Boston. The true urban center is but a compound of the communal center. (But the metropolitan area is neither urban nor communal: it is a "mixture" and not a "compound"; an agglomeration, not a community; a mass, not a structure; it is inorganic, not organic).

Each one of the three contacts named is destroyed in turn by the force of the *metropolitan* environment, illustrated in a modern Boston, a modern Paris, or a modern Athens.

We have all seen it happening. First, within the limits of the so-called city itself, human contacts are disconnected and confused in the stampede of mechanized living, groups get together with increasing difficulty, old buildings are replaced by standardized towers, and the individual city of Boston is merged in the metropolitan glacier of East Massachusetts.

Next this iron glacier, expanding in finger-like projections along the motor roads, rolls over the neighboring villages—White Plains, N. Y., or Lexington, Massachusetts—and breaks up the communal societies as effectively as the original ice sheet broke up the forest and plant societies.

Finally the stream, thinning down to bill-boards and gas stations in the hinterland, thickens again into one long slum on the top of, say, Hoosac Mountain and destroys the primeval setting and its man-to-nature contact.

Each basic human contact—urban, communal, primeval—is destroyed by the metropolitan intrusion: as a plant "civilization" was once attacked by a glacial invasion, so a human civilization is now threatened by a metropolitan invasion.

THUS our modern, western metropolitan iron civilization flows outward from Boston and Philadelphia and New York and Chicago into the hinterland of America; and (neatly reduced to capital goods and packed away in ships) outward also from the seaports of America and of Europe through Panama and Suez, past Honolulu and Singapore, to the back countries of the world. To what extent can the American engineer successfully control the tendencies of this flow of flows—in China, in Argentina, in Mexico—and above all in the United States of America? Into which type of mold will he seek to guide this flow—into the organic mold of the human contacts (the primeval, communal, and truly urban) or the inorganic mold of mechanical contacts (the metropolitan)? What is his vision of America and the world of American influence—is it a quiltwork of varied cultures or a framework of standardized civilization? Is it a Grecian or a Roman vision?

America just now is the most Roman of them all: her latent natural resources exceed those of any other nation or any likely alliance of nations. Mighty is America—physically and industrially! What is to be the final product" of her mightiness and industry? Is it human growth or mechanical expansion?—a finer culture or a grosser industry? What is our "manifest destiny" and rôle—that of a growing leader or an expanding bully? This depends upon the leadership and guidance exhibited in controlling the flow of our own half of Western iron civilization:—the flow within and from America of blood and iron, of man and mechanism, of population and capital goods. It depends, so far as engineering goes, upon the kind of mold in which the yet fluid iron of our civilization will ultimately set. Will this be a mold which favors human contacts or opposes them? On the solution of these problems in regional engineering largely depends our destiny both at home and abroad. Can we at least aspire to a Grecian destiny?

PRESENT times recall those of a generation ago in the heydey of President Roosevelt's administration. Somebody has said that in those years there was the promise of an American renaissance. "There grew the arts of war and peace!" A glorious hero was "T. R.": he put through the Panama Canal; he sent the navy around the world (to impress whom it might concern); he preached the gospel of the conservation of natural resources; he feared not to dine with Booker T. Washington nor with J. Pierpont Morgan; he rode horseback with the cowpunchers; he spanked the Chicago meat packers; he got spanked himself. Many a man yet cries out in his heart "Oh, that Teddy reigned again!" This epoch of dynamic activity is still a background for the engineer to build upon.

We need not hope—nor fear—for a "Second Theodore Roosevelt": if our present chief turns out to be in truth the chief engineer he will be the "First Herbert Hoover." But the two men bear comparison. Both men were travelers—in the primeval, the communal, and the (somewhat) urban environments of at least three continents. Both men appreciated the environment indigenous to the particular continent and region and culture in which they found themselves—whether the African forest, the Australian village, or the European boulevard. Both men appreciated the danger, especially as applied to America, to each one of these native indigenous environments—whether the Rocky Mountain forest, the New England village, or the Washington boulevard. Mr. Roosevelt tried to defend his basic indigenous America from the *commercial America* of his day: "I am against the land skinner every time," he said, and placed the forests of the western public domain out of danger from the timber miner; then appointed commissions on Country Life and on replanning the City of Washington. Mr. Hoover wishes to defend his basic indigenous America from the *metropolitan America* of the present day: such, at least, seems to be the promise and implication in his words that "America is not an agglomeration of factories, of railways, of ships, of dynamos."

Native China and native India are not the only countries threatened by Western iron civilization: native America is also being invaded. The "commercialism" of Mr. Roosevelt's day has become the "metropolitanism" of Mr. Hoover's day. Fortunately, however, it is still in fluid state and can yet be molded by the engineer. The key to Mr. Roosevelt's power in checking the spread of commercialism over the western States was the Federal ownership of the public domain. Mr. Hoover's power to dyke the flow of metropolitanism throughout the United States lies in the Federal control over government-aided public roads, and the influence, by example, upon state-aided highways. The public motor road is the channel of metropolitan flow, and the regulation of its right-of-way means the regulation of the flow itself. Here is one power in the hands of our chief engineer for controlling within America the flow of iron civilization.

Under what conditions affecting the nation-wide countryside of America shall the Federal American Government appropriate its moneys to any one American State for its special advantages in roadway development within the territory of its jurisdiction? And under what conditions shall the State appropriate its moneys for the same purpose?

There are means also for controlling the too rapid and dangerous flow of our iron civilization in the backward countries, but these cannot be discussed in the limits of this article.

Has Mr. Hoover the vision to give us the vision to see the flood now rising about us? A flood not of water but of iron—a deluge capable of stirring war abroad and of blighting peace at home. And yet a power capable of freeing mankind from poverty and hard labor. This is our particular problem of "flood control":—to guide the flow of our American half of iron civilization. Will the American engineer be able to control American engineering?

*Benton MacKaye, writer of the foregoing article, is the author of a volume entitled "The New Exploration," which deals at length with the problems outlined and suggested in this discussion. The book, issued by Harcourt, Brace & Co., contains the illustrations at the head of this article.*

## Man and Author

A CONRAD MEMORIAL LIBRARY. The Collection of GEORGE T. KEATING. New York: Doubleday, Doran. 1929. $25.

Reviewed by RICHARD CURLE

THIS is, in all probability, the most sumptuous monograph to do with an author that has ever been produced. Mr. Keating's Conrad collection is remarkable for its completeness, for its out-of-the-way manuscript material, and for its close association with Conrad himself; and this magnificent catalogue will be, not alone the envy and delight of every Conrad collector, but a rich quarry for students of his life.

Here are the great rarities, such as "The Nigger of the Narcissus" in wrappers, of which only seven copies were published; the first issue of "Nostromo," which ends on page 478 instead of page 480; "The Inheritors," with the misspelt dedication; the 1913 "Chance," and others too numerous to mention. And here also are unpublished letters of Conrad, twelve original certificates of discharge given him during his seaman's career, six letters of recommendation from former captains of his, Conrad's navigation charts, and the fragment of an unpublished manuscript on marriage.

And that is only the beginning. What could be more fascinating than the copies of his own books presented to his wife; the proof sheets of "The Rescue" covered with "almost countless deletions and corrections" in Conrad's hand; the quotations scattered by Conrad for Mr. Keating over a set of his first editions? What indeed? The whole work has the quality of an intimate memorial, and the title of it has been well chosen.

The present writer may perhaps be allowed to state that he had something to do with one of its most important aspects. Conrad asked him what reply he should make when Mr. Keating requested him to embellish a set of his works. The answer will be obvious on consulting these pages. It was, unsuspected by us all, a race against death: only a few months after the task was completed Conrad laid down his pen for ever on that bright, still August morning of 1924.

The edition of this work is limited to 501 copies (425 for sale), and the wealth of curious information it contains, the varied mass of illustrations which adorn it, the superb manner of its production, suggest that, in any case, it would be eagerly sought for even if it did not possess the attractive feature which now remains to be described.

Mr. Keating has persuaded a number of well known literary figures and friends of Conrad to write prefaces to the different volumes. Mr. Tomlinson introduces "Almayer's Folly," Sir Hugh Clifford "An Outcast of the Islands," Mr. Morley "The Nigger of the Narcissus," Mr. Garnett "Tales of Unrest," Mr. Ford "The Inheritors," Mr. McFee "Romance," Mr. Galsworthy "Nostromo," Mr. Walpole "The Secret Agent," Mr. Symons "A Set of Six," Dr. Canby "Under Western Eyes," Mrs. Conrad "A Personal Record," etc.

And thus Mr. Keating's monograph is not only a record of Conrad, the man and the author, but a critical estimate of his genius.

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# BOOKS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

## An American Tory

SAMUEL JOHNSON, PRESIDENT OF KING'S COLLEGE: His Career and Writings. Edited by HERBERT W. and CAROL SCHNEIDER. New York: Columbia University Press. 1929. 4 vols.

Reviewed by EDWARD H. REISNER

THE publication of four stout volumes of letters and other writings of Samuel Johnson by the Columbia University Press comes as the effort of a belated Boswell to recall the life and activities of an important eighteenth-century figure in American history. And since this labor of filial love appears on the occasion of the one hundred and seventy-fifth anniverrsary of the founding of old King's College in the city and province of New York, the reader is put immediately on the defensive against a possible partiality which university loyalty might be expected to engender in such a work. An examination of the volumes shows, however, such prejudgment to be entirely unjustified, for the editors have been content to let the writings of Samuel Johnson and his contemporaries tell their own story. The only exceptions to the use of source materials are a brief and illuminating account of the development of Dr. Johnson's philosophy by Dr. Herbert W. Schneider, and a brief foreword by President Nicholas Murray Butler. Perhaps the careful student would incline to demur on first thought from Mr.Butler's naming his earliest predecessor along with Benjamin Franklin and Jonathan Edwards as one of "the three personalities which rose above mediocrity in the strictly intellectual life of the dwellers on the Atlantic seaboard during the middle of the eighteenth century." Yes, one might say, perhaps he was third, but maybe a "bad third." However, this man Samuel Johnson has been such a stranger hitherto that one must have time to get acquainted with him through the means provided in this recent publication of his intellectual output, and on first reading there appears to be much that favors Dr. Butler's estimate.

Samuel Johnson stands revealed in these pages as an omniverous reader of everything that was published in England or the American colonies on philosophical and religious issues. He showed his initiative, if not a shrewdly critical attitude, in accepting Bishop Berkeley's philosophy as the basis of his own. While remaining staunchly orthodox, he adapted within his own system of thinking much of the eighteenth-century thought, which was attempting to derive religion and morals from the actualities of the natural world. In his controversies with Jonathan Edwards and his followers over the doctrines of predestination and free will he showed himself to be a man of sound sense and a tireless, hard-hitting opponent. In his program of college studies he made the extraordinary proposal that young men should be educated to the peak of the intellectual attainments of their own, and not some long-past, generation. Above all, Samuel Johnson is revealed as a man freed from the narrowing, oppressive domination of Connecticut Calvinism. Truly, Samuel Johnson improves upon acquaintance.

To limit the significance of the Johnson volumes, however, to what they reveal of the man, would be to neglect their great value as a source book for eighteenth-century life in the American colonies. The general reader will find much to delight, and the student of social history much to reward, him in the more intimate personal correspondence of Dr. Johnson with his immediate family and closer acquaintances. (Was any person ever more afraid of anything than this old man was of smallpox? And did ever a man in his sixties broach with greater candor or diffidence his project of taking a second wife?) The student of religious and ecclesiastical history will find in these pages new evidence of the un-Christian bitterness with which controversies over the ways and means of serving God were conducted in that generation. The student of philosophy will have light thrown for him upon an important phase of the development of American thought. For the student of educational history, especially for a first-hand knowledge of the conditions surrounding higher education in the eighteenth century, the entire publication is a rich mine, while the fourth volume provides an invaluable documentary history of the stormy founding of King's College. And, finally, in despair of naming all the scholarly relationships in which this publication may be found useful, it may be noted that in the letters, the philosophy, and the controversies of that staunch old Tory, Samuel Johnson, may be found rich material for reconstructing the psychology of loyalism,—that most misrepresented, most discredited, and most completely lost cause of American history.

## Motivationism

HUMAN MOTIVATION. By L. T. TROLAND. New York: D. Van Nostrand. 1928.

Reviewed by JOSEPH JASTROW

PROFESSOR TROLAND of Harvard university has produced a work of importance. "Motivation" psychology is a name that has been used sporadically to indicate the emphasis on the urges to behavior as the central problem of psychology. Motivationism may now be added to the other "isms" contending for dominance. The Freudian approach has probably done most to concentrate attention on the whys and hows of behavior, its sources and mechanisms,—of how we get that way.

The next task, here attempted, is to set in order the entire range of mechanisms operating in the establishment and satisfaction of human desires. This is a formidable and a technical task. Its appeal is to professional psychologists; it cannot be a popular undertaking; though in the end the lay phases of interest in this absorbing inquiry will benefit by the guidance of the thorough exploration wherein true science has its being.

From the preface we learn that the questions discussed are "(1) our inborn tendencies to action, (2) the means by which we learn, (3) the basis of 'pleasures and pain' and the part which they play in learning, (4) the foundations of 'happiness' in general, (5) the nature and operation of 'instincts' such as that of sex, (6) the physiological meaning of emotional experience, (7) the explanation of typical modern interests: automobiles, radio, and the like, (8) suggestions towards a scientific treatment of the problems of ethics." The programme is inviting; but to reach the inviting stages of application, one must be prepared to consider the nature of the reflex responses; the instinctive or appetitive expressions; the mechanisms of learning; the pleasure-pain aspects of all these processes; the establishment of complex desire and emotion; the pervasive rôle of sex; the integration in personality; the enthronement of the ego; and then only in the last hundred pages of the book is one prepared to interpret the operation of all these forces in the setting of modern interests and occupation, from mating to business to politics.

As Professor Troland is deeply interested in the mechanics of the supporting structures —even calling to his aid the analogies in physical structure and their mathematical formulation—his perspective is one with major attention to the foundations. The popular interest is in the human superstructure. Many of us are more interested in the complex interplay of our motivation schemes than in a minute understanding of their composition. Yet a correct insight and

(*Continued on page 346*)

IT was the funeral of the sinful chicken. John had made a mess of the sermon, just as Henry Po'ter had predicted, and now that little dark boy came to the rescue to preach a proper funeral oration. Taking an almanac from his pocket and reading in Brother Shadrach Thompson's most unctious voice, he announced his text, Hell is fer sinners and if you once git in you cain *nevuh* git out:

"W'en you once gits in, you cain' n-e-v-u-h git out, hah! W'en de chillun uv Gawd di-ees dey g-o-e-s to heb'm, hah! Dey g-o-e-s to Glory, hah! W'en a sinner di-ees dey goes to de devul, hah! Dey g-o-e-s to hell, hah! Dis po' li'l' chicken, hah! He wuz a sinner, hah! He's gone to hell, hah! He wouldn' 'pent, hah! Us tried to git 'im to 'pent, hah! Us ax 'im to pray, hah! He wouldn't do it, hah! He tole his mammy lies, hah! He steal de udder chickens' vittles, hah! He fit all de li'l sickly chickens, hah! Now de devul's got 'im, hah! In a red-hot chicken coop, hah! Hit's made out uv i-yun, hah! He cain' git out, hah! Ur-r-r-h *sinner,* you got to 'pent 'fo' you dies, hah! 'Ca'se you c-a-i-n' 'pent atterwu'ds, hah! Ur-r-r-r-h chick-e-n-n, hah! Hit's too late now, hah, Don' b-e-g Aberham, hah! t' fetch you no watter, hah! He c-a-i-n' reach you-u-u-oo, hah! De fiah's hot, hah! Hit's made out'n san', hah! De Jaybird fetch it, hah! Eve'y Friday, hah! Ur-r-r-h J-a-y-bird, Jaybird, fetch on mo' san', hah! De Devul's dar, hah! Wid a red-hot pitchfork, hah! He punch dat chicken, hah! He burn off 'is fedders, hah! He burn off his toes, hah! He burn off his eyes, hah! Dey grow out ag'in, hah! He burn 'em some mo', hah! Dat chicken beg, hah! Ur-r Mister Devul, p-l-e-a-s-e suh, le'me 'lone, hah! Ur-r-r-r-uh chick-e-n-n-n, chick-en, chicken, you cain' 'pent now, hah!—Brer Sam, lead us in prayer."

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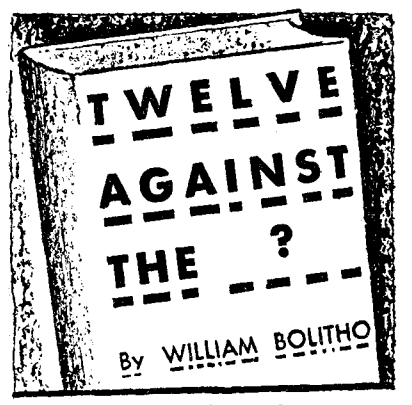


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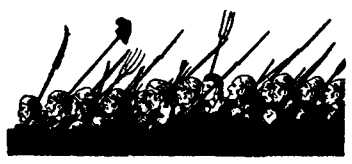

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## Books of Special Interest

(*Continued from page* 344)

control of the upper reaches of our motivation psychology is dependent upon the analyses here provided. The central thesis of the book is that the higher types of motivation depend upon the patterns of the lower. It recognizes equally the physiological approach, the psychological consummation, and the psycho-physiological bridge between the two. Behaviorism is hopelessly inadequate because it stops with the former; Freudianism distorts and exaggerates because it accepts as dominant too psychic a motivation scheme; motivationism combines the two into a third, making motivationism a complete chord in the psychological theme.

### Butter and Some Salt

THE ROMANCE AND RISE OF THE AMERICAN TROPICS. By SAMUEL CROWTHER. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1928.

OUR NEIGHBOR NICARAGUA. By FLOYD CRAMER. New York: Frederick A. Stokes. 1928.

Reviewed by GERALD CHITTENDEN

MR. CROWTHER spreads the butter too thick. He has laid it on not with a trowel or even with a spade, but with a steam shovel. And this is a pity, both from the point of view of Mr. Crowther and from that of American enterprise in the tropics. In these days, there is much loose talk about American Imperialism and Dollar Diplomacy—talk that frequently arises from uninformed prejudice, and tends to perpetuate the conditions which it attacks. "The Romance and Rise of the American Tropics," dealing as it does with the rise but not with the romance of the United Fruit Company, resembles obvious advertising rather than an effort to discover causes and follow them to their effects. We are led protesting to the conclusion that the Fruit Company has done it all.

Yet the book is full of incontrovertible facts—quite as full of them as the annual report of any progressive corporation, and quite as oblivious of the depths of truth that must lie beneath all facts. Anyone who has known intimately the United Fruit Company and its work will read this voluminous publicity with disappointment and irritation. Anyone who has not so known it will read it with his tongue in his cheek. It lacks soul, as the Company most certainly does not, as the East India Company and the Hudson's Bay Company in their day most certainly did not. All three of these organizations have exposed their employees to various and real dangers on the edges of the world; all three of them, therefore, have touched the imaginations of their servants, generating in them a feeling which is strangely like patriotism. Any history of the Company—and in spite of its comprehensive title, this book is nothing else—should deal with this profound and genuine character. Perception and synthesis are necessary; facts and figures, here as always, are merely the raw material of history and not history itself. Andrew Preston and his banana tree are too much like George Washington and his cherry tree.

In dealing with Nicaragua, Mr. Cramer avoids some of the nets which have trapped Mr. Crowther. He deals somewhat too sympathetically with William Walker and his troop, whose savagery furnished Zelaya with a target to aim at, and somewhat too harshly with Commodore Vanderbilt, who was another sort of pirate and less appealing. Elsewhere, however, he denounces in no uncertain terms the policies of the United States and of European countries in their dealings with this much-vexed country. The result is that the reader goes willingly along with him, and ends by seeing the necessity for our intervention, whether he altogether approves of it or not. At worst, it is better than any possible alternative; at best, it may be the dawn of a new day in tropical America. The chapter on Sandino is particularly authoritative and convincing, showing an intimate knowledge of the Nicaraguan point of view. "Our Neighbor Nicaragua" is a primer of tropical conditions which may well arouse curiosity and induce all but obstinately convinced opponents of our policy to read more and talk less.

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A copy of the early sixteenth-century work by the Moslem explorer and cartographer, El Bekri, was recently discovered in Marrakech and is now in the famous library at Fez, where it is being studied by scholars. The book, which is of great value, was discovered quite by accident by a French traveller.


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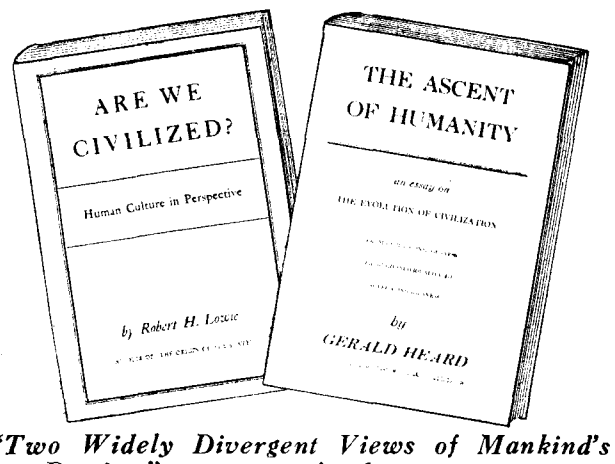


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*by* Samuel Putnam

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The material in this book was collected in Europe over a period of years, and Mr. Putnam's finds range, geographically, from the British Museum to the Library at Dresden, from the Bibliotheque Nationale at Paris to the University Library at Geneva. At Geneva, for example, the biographer succeeded in excavating certain material which casts a new light on the relations between Rabelais and Calvin, as well as on the former's attitude toward the Protestant Reformation.

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# The New Books

The books listed by title only in the classified list below are noted here as received. Many of them will be reviewed later.

## Belles Lettres

GARDENS OF THIS WORLD. By HENRY B. FULLER. Knopf. 1929. $2.50.

Mr. Fuller, who died but recently, was the author of some dozen or more volumes, several of them, like the present volume, laid against the background of America's romantic and artistic Europe. The Gardens of the World are places where old fashioned peace and beauty dwell. The book is not quite a novel, nor quite a book of travel. There is a thread of story and there are various characters. But the theme is the new world of aeroplanes, steam yachts, millionaires, and youth, moving through mellow Mediterranean scenes; and two or three elderly gentlemen who lingeringly bid those scenes adieu. These elders have not only the sadness of personal parting, but a feeling that the world also is bidding adieu to all that had been so dear to them.

VISIONS AND CHIMERAS. By PROSSER FRYE. Marshal Jones. 1929. 52.50.

There should be little of perfunctory routine in the rhetoric classes of the Professor of Rhetoric in the University of Nebraska. Professor Frye is an outspoken critic of vigor and penetration. He writes on Sheridan, Sterne, Carlyle, Arnold, Calderon, Montaigne, Pascal, Sir Thomas Browne, Renan, Huxley, Pater, DeQuincey, and Ibsen; worn subjects, but he freshens them. He has his own angle and comes in each case to an independent and persuasive result. He is a critic of men as well as of their writings, and has the poise of experience with life and with letters. He is not ashamed to own and exhibit a strain of Puritanism, a liking for tensile strength in character. He notes with frank distaste the something "flabby" in Renan, the something "shabby" in Sterne, the mouthing half frenzy of Carlyle, the dilettantism of Montaigne. But he is unexpectedly kind to Walter Pater and severe on Thomas Huxley. In fact his is not a mind made up to a program. He is an admirable writer, and a personality.

## Biography

HORACE WALPOLE AND MADAME DU DEFFAND. An Eighteenth Century Friendship. By ANNA DE KOVEN. Appleton. 1929. $3.

Mrs. de Koven gives full measure in this book, a "popular" one. The first half of it narrates "The History" of the two protagonists, and the spirit of the eighteenth century is traced to its roots in, nothing less, Magna Charta! The second half, "The Drama," is a distillation of Mme. du Deffand's letters to Walpole as they appear in the late Mrs. Paget Toynbee's three fat and, alas, now expensive volumes.

In her preface, Mrs. de Koven fairly states that her subject has been discussed by great predecessors—Sainte Beuve, Remusat, Lytton Strachey, and André Maurois—and it is perhaps too much to hope for new light upon it. The captious will be annoyed by numerous small inaccuracies. A more serious matter is where Sir Robert is made to say, in a direct quotation, of Horace's birth, "Whoever this offspring is, he does honor to the family." Mrs. de Koven should have given her authority for this, as it is a statement of considerable interest to Walpolians and entirely new. It suggests Lady Louisa Stuart's familiar remarks upon the same theme, but what Lady Louisa said was quite different.

Those to whom this strange romance is new will, of course, find entertainment in this book, and those to whom it is familiar will welcome the reproduction of Maria Skerrett's portrait which hangs, presumably, at Houghton.

## Fiction

DUST AND SUN. By CLEMENTS RIPLEY. Payson & Clarke. 1929. $2.

With a lusty Central American revolution as a background, Mr. Ripley gives us a satisfactory adventure story. The battle scenes are excellent, and if the narratives occasionally achieve something less than credibility, we are in no mood to complain. Two comrades face innumerable and almost insuperable hardships; a girl loved by both comes for a time between them; but of course we comfortably anticipate the happy ending. There is much hard horse sense in Mr. Ripley's refreshing comments upon war, both in Europe and in Central America. All in all, the novel is good reading.

ALL THE BROTHERS WERE VALIANT. By BEN AMES WILLIAMS. Dutton. 1929. $2.

This is a strong tale of high adventure in the days of whaling out of New England. Although short, "All the Brothers Were Valiant" is memorable for its vividness, its striking bareness. Mr. Williams, it will be remembered, tells of the testing of Joel Shore by a mutiny in the far Pacific, and of his cruel conflict with his wild-blooded brother. This story was well worth reprinting. Not many novels published in 1919 could have stood the test so successfully.

THE WHITE BETRAYAL. By HELLMUTH UNGER. Translated by DERICK WULF. Brentano's. 1929. $2.

The tragedy of Greeley's polar expedition in the '90's is here revived from the records by a man who has felt it with passion, and a haunting picture lodges in the mind. It is a brief but thrilling memorial, with no word wasted. The Arctic background is chiseled out with metallic phrases, and against it stand out touching figures, the young commander, the saturnine doctor who wrote his own epitaph—"died of poison," the thief, the malcontent, the scurvy-stricken men who lay in the darkness remembering their women. Putting the slang of 1926 in their mouths is a lapse in the translator's taste; otherwise nothing distracts the attention from the single impression intended—"to die is easy, very easy; it is only hard to strive, to endure, to live."

(*Continued on page* 350)

LAUGHING BOY

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Oliver La Farge joins this group of promise with his 'Laughing Boy.' It is a daring experiment, triumphantly successful. To choose Navajo Indians as your material, to exclude the white man, save as the merest accidental accessory, to depend wholly on a young Navajo lover and his mate for your plot and your romantic appeal — and to bring it off — is a most uncommon feat. Familiarity with the Navajos, their customs and their country, would not alone have sufficed to produce 'Laughing Boy.' A born artist, a skillful writer, and that gift of imagination which makes the reader know the characters and believe the events, these were also needed. The tale is haunting and poetic in an extraordinary degree. It's too good a book for the train, with conductor and train boys breaking in upon the magic of its spell; let the reader take it to a corner in the garden, or a tree or canoe in a quiet place, or to his room when the rest of the house is asleep, and no telephone will disturb him.

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**by JAMES GOULD COZZENS**

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**by HAROLD WESTON**

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# The New Books

## Fiction

(*Continued from page* 348)

GLASS OVER FLOWER. By JEAN TEMPLE. Cape-Smith. 1929. $2.

Jean Temple has written the biography of an intense, introspective woman who seems always to embrace experience more that she may gain material for later analysis than from any desire for the experience itself. She constantly steps back from the circle of any relationship in order to view it from as many different angles as possible. Marcia is self-conscious to the extent that life holds interest for her only within the confines over which she can cast the isolating shadow of this self. Being a modern, and having been subjected in childhood and as a young girl to much ugly restriction and misunderstanding, freedom and beauty become for her the very essentials of life. And so she starts out most deviously, for her elusive goal.

Marriage seems to offer itself as a means. She marries a liberal young clergyman whose work promises Marcia the magic of New York. Almost at once he is recalled to the narrow communities she had hoped to escape. Marcia had never loved him and after a short unsatisfactory life together she leaves him taking her baby with her. Work and a life of her own. Then the lover. In giving herself too prodigally, her gift becomes a demand. The lover leaves. Marcia joins a small community of artists who are attempting to "work out an experiment in human relations." Another lover, the perfect one this time.

Events press upon her. A baby is coming; the young clergyman procures his divorce; the perfect lover is unfaithful. Marcia, apparently unconsciously, denies her gods, recalls an unwilling lover, and after all reality has been drained out of the relationship, she marries him. The end is inevitable. Marcia is once more left alone. Another lover is to come, but briefly, bringing her the secret of keeping experience undefiled.

Outlined the book seems full of events, in reading one is more conscious of implications and reactions than of the events themselves. What "Glass Over Flower" gains through this constant preoccupation with the sources of personality it more than loses in vitality. Every emotion is taken up by the roots for examination before it has had time to entrench itself in any soil of actual life. There are plenty of Marcias abroad today—haunting the edges of life, venturing on a step, sampling, and withdrawing to contemplate the effects. Dedicated to freedom, they act with analytic caution. They represent one phase of modernism. It is a phase that makes for thin living and it makes thin literature. This particular novel, for instance, carefully designed and beautifully written as it is, has too tenuous a hold on reality to be more than its name implies, an *objet d'art*, not for the rigors of daily life.

THE ROAD. By ANDRÉ CHAMSON. Scribners. 1929. $2.

This novel is André Chamson's introduction to this country, but, rather than the effusive embrace on either cheek which the typical American has come to expect from the typical Frenchman, here is a disconcertingly solemn bow. This young French writer knows his peasants and takes them seriously. He sees in their actual everyday lives a grim sense of reality and value which is all the stronger for a lack of conscious philosophizing, so he portrays them with an uncompromising realism. While his attitude is one of understanding and appreciation, his technique is as relentless as the peasant fate itself.

He tells the life-story of a young peasant couple given the opportunity to move to town and participate in commercialism on its lowest scale. The prospect of saving money beyond their immediate needs becomes a monomania with Anna which prevents any fulfilment of her life. Upon her death, Combes, who has never oriented himself spiritually in the new environment, finds irrepressible joy in reverting to type and trudging the full length of the road he has helped to build, back to his land. The book is a slow-moving account of dull people, but the whole peasant population of France is justified in the character of Combes, who finds contentment in simply functioning as a part of Nature. The unvoiced philosophy which he lives gives a surprising strength to this unassuming book.

## Juvenile

(*The Children's Bookshop will appear next week.*)

(*Continued on page* 352)

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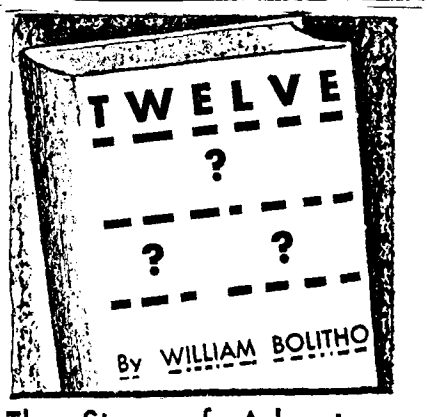


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# The New Books

## Miscellaneous

(*Continued from page 350*)

SOUND MOTION PICTURES. By HAROLD B. FRANKLIN. Doubleday, Doran. 1929. $3.

Sound pictures seem to have divided their audience into two classes, those who believe that the surface hasn't been scratched yet, and those who think it has, but don't like the scratch. To the former group, Mr. Franklin's "Sound Motion Pictures" should prove an excellent text-book and guide. It accounts for every conceivable angle of the new medium, historically and technically. The material is so clearly arranged that anyone with merely a small boy's curiosity as to what makes a talky talk can get the information in one reading. This clear tabulation of the material covered is a thoughtful gesture to the lay reader, for a large portion of the book is devoted to technical details which will be interesting only to the studio worker or the theatre owner. The theory of acoustics is gone into in some detail, for example. There is even a chapter describing the anatomy and functions of the human ear. Photographs and drawings help to make the whole subject easily understandable to anyone who has even a casual curiosity about the talkies.

CHINESE RUGS. By GORDON B. LEITCH. Dodd Mead. 1928. $4.

It is difficult to give an adequate review of a work in such a specialized and little documented field as this without an expert acquaintance with the actual material which few possess. The facts presented have rather of necessity to be taken at face value, but some criterion of their accuracy may be obtained from the form in which they are presented. Sloppiness on this side is very apt to be accompanied by vagueness on the other.

The author claims no encyclopedic standard for his book, but it seems to the writer that he has omitted no side of the subject in the hundred and sixty odd pages of text which are amply fortified by excellent halftones and technical diagrams.

The preface indicates that the author is a scientist. Certainly the thoroughgoing and ordered attack would corroborate this. After being introduced to the geographical and historical background the reader is put in contact with the weavers themselves and their methods and materials as practised now and in the past. Full information is apparently available to the investigator on the spot, since the craft is a living one in spite of a commercial market. Questions of design and its traditional relation to religious and poetical symbolism are summarized in a way most helpful to the layman even outside this particular field. The ancient and modern rug types are discussed in their esthetic and technical aspects and the whole essay summarized in concrete advice to the collector based on all the information previously conveyed and made understandable by it.

The method of the book apparently leaves little to be desired. Should a second edition be called for, those interested in the subject would certainly be willing to meet the extra cost of a series of color plates, which would help considerably in defining verbal description. Color seems to be rather an important index to provenance especially in the modern field, so any further aid in this direction would be distinctly in order.

## Poetry

BALLYHOO FOR A MENDICANT. By CARLTON TALBOTT. Horace Liveright. 1929.

This odd new book of verses by a Baltimorean is highly recommended by Samuel Hoffenstein, author of "Poems in Praise of Practically Nothing." The book is like a small basket of tart crab-apples; or it is as if some of the most entertaining windows of antiques on Madison Avenue had suddenly come to life and their old colored prints and wood-cuts were actual scenery and background to the antics of animated figurines. Mr. Talbott gives us a Woodcut Holiday, Dutch Phantoms, and other quaint apparitions, with his finger along his nose and his cracked harpsichord tinkling out entertaining tunes. Certainly there is sharp originality here, there are amusing plights and plots, there is dapper antiquarianism. Occasionally we seem to get a whiff of T. S. Eliot in his lighter moments; but that is not often. We pass on the little volume to you for a not too earnest hour. It has a gesture quite its own.

THE LIGHT OF DAY. Edited by *Henry Harrison*. New York: Harrison. $3.

FIVE POETS. Illustrated by *Herbert E. Fouts*. New York: Henry Harrison. $2.25.


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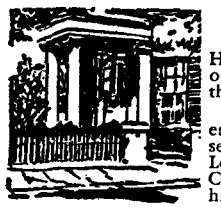

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# Round About Parnassus

By William Rose Benét

THE most important book on American poetry that has come out for years is Alfred Kreymborg's "Our Singing Strength, An Outline of American Poetry, 1620-1930," published by Coward-McCann, Inc. We were going to devote this column to it to-day, but we recalled a promise made last week to treat of certain books of more or less light verse, and also, so large is the Kreymborg volume, that we have not, as yet, wholly digested it. Several very small points we may make in passing, though our admiration for the tremendous job that Mr. Kreymborg has done is very great. We share his admiration of Leonard Bacon's satiric verse, but we do not feel that he quite does justice to such pure distilled poetry as is to be found in his "Animula Vagula" and even in certain lyrics in "Guinea Fowl." No one in this day and generation can write satire in verse to hold a candle to Leonard Bacon's, yet the man's greater side is as poet; and a dashed fine poet he can be when he puts his mind to it. Despite all the satire there is also poetry of a high order of the imagination in "Quincibald," for instance. And if Alfred had ever talked to Leonard he would not speak of "*Dr.* Bacon." I do not know whether or not the author of "The Banquet of the Poets" ever attained a full professorship at the University of California, but I do know that that most lovable of friends conveys anything but an academic impression. He is vital youth personified despite his being somewhere near my own age and his hair now iron-gray. His animation and energy of utterance make most of the people in the same room with him usually seem only half alive. However, in such a monumental work as Kreymborg's slips are bound to occur, and this one is indeed harmless. It is extraordinary how well he has preserved proper proportionate mention in a work so large, and more than extraordinary that he has left out, so far as we can see, practically no poet of any importance. This is a volume that should be in all libraries and all schools and colleges of the country.

We may be beating the release date by a few days with mention of Christopher Morley's "Poems," now all brought together in one volume by Doubleday, Doran, but, as we are turning to light verse, here is one of the best light versifiers of our time, and here is a book that contains both pure poetry and gorgeous occasional clowning. What No Sho says to his friends in the second instalment of "Translations from the Chinese," Morley might say to his audience:

*If there is any kind of poetry*
*I haven't written,*
*You might tell me about it,*
*And I'll do some.*

The "Translations" are his best single contribution in the field of light verse. In "The Palimpsest," preceding "The Old Mandarin," he has explained that what he calls translating from the Chinese is to decipher "in each man's heart, Chinese writing—a secret script, a cryptic language; the strange ideographs of the spirit." His range is wide in these short notations; sometimes he is deliciously trivial, sometimes deeply sagacious. The whole affair is carried off with that gusto which lends a charm even to his least good verse. He has developed greatly since "Songs for a Little House" and "The Rocking Horse," but the practice of verse has been, of course, only one of his multifarious interests. Nevertheless, as the late Elinor Wylie said of his lines that bear a title I have never liked, since it is far too trivial for their excellence, "They are as perfect in their own way as Herrick!" Here they are, an example of his compacted best:

*Truth is enough for prose:*
*Calmly it goes*
*To tell just what it knows.*

*For verse, skill will suffice—*
*Delicate, nice*
*Casting of verbal dice.*

*Poetry, men attain*
*By subtler pain*
*More flagrant in the brain—*

*An honesty unfeigned,*
*A heart unchained,*
*A madness well restrained.*

Those few lines sum up perfectly the differences between literary media, and every word is telling.

Morley's best poems are to be found in the first section of the book, "Parson's Pleasure," and in the last section of the book "Toulemonde." In the former, "Sir Kenelm to the Lady Venetia," "Of a Child that Had Fever," the title poem, "Château de Missery," "On a Portrait of Dr. Samuel Johnson," "Desiderio Pulchriora," are all true poetry, and Morley is also most adept with the quatrain. Vide:

*Ad Puellam Minusculam*

*How to convey, describe, that furious note,*
*That piston-stroke of squalled reiteration*
*That issues from a two-months' infant's throat?*
*The immortal voice of human indignation?*

Excellent, too, in the section "Hide and Seek" are the two sonnets on Broadway, entitled "The River of Light," and the one called "In an Auction Room," concerning the sale of a letter of John Keats to Fanny Brawne. Also, as we did once frequent together the swimming-pool in the Woolworth Building, its basement, I am still moved to mirth by the puns in "Musings on a Cool Retreat," namely: "And crying *O decorum quicquid* we thank thee for this pool: *some* liquid!" and "Then splash, or float among the ripple as passive as a participle." Morley will continue to do that sort of thing to his dying day, and nothing can stop him—but I for one find it often enormously engaging. So we come to "Toulemonde," which ends and crowns the book. The interlude "The Coroner's Gone A-Maying" is Morley at his rambunctious best, but we feel that it should not have been sandwiched between the more meditative and philosophical parts of "Toulemonde." Still, at that, it expresses Morley. E. V. Lucas has thought of him as primarily the domestic poet. He once burst out that he would be damned if he would be taken for a "cozy" poet any longer. Indeed, he has become far more than that. Like all journalists he has al-

(*Continued on page* 359)


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MIDSTREAM
MY LATER LIFE


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# The Reader's Guide

Conducted by EDWARD DAVISON

Inquiries in regard to the selection of books and questions of like nature should be addressed to MRS. BECKER, c/o *The Saturday Review*

*F. K. V., Chicago, Ill., says, "I am so thoroughly enjoying rereading and introducing my son to 'The Bastable Children' that I am wondering if that other dear delight of my childhood, 'The Phoenix and the Carpet,' has been reprinted. If it has, tell me by whom; if it hasn't, I should like to put in an order with an English bookseller. I have no idea of its price if out of print, and would appreciate your telling me."*

THE first action taken by this reader, upon reassuring herself that the Bastables were all represented in the noble volume above mentioned (brought out in the United States by Coward-McCann last fall), was to flutter through the pages in the fond hope that the Psammead might have slipped in, or the Phoenix. It was too much to hope, considering how much has been already crammed into this charming "omnibus," and I can but trust that Coward-McCann have it in mind to continue tapping the rich vein of Nesbit-Bland literature. Out of print? not a bit; every London shop-window showing children's books blossoms with "The Phoenix and the Carpet" at three and six; T. Fisher Unwin publishes this, and "Wet Magic," and a long line of peerless stories whose names would stir responsive chords in the breast of any old reader of *The Strand Magazine*—by the way, that should have gone on the list of English periodicals mentioned in a preceding reply. There is another E. Nesbit story, not for children, that went out of print in the United States some time ago, but was so much in demand by a friend of mine that she used to order several copies a year for presents to convalescents, people in the dumps, and such-like objects of Christian charity. This is "The Red House" (Methuen)—not to be confounded with "The Red House Mystery," by A. A. Milne, though this admirable detective story appears on the same page of Methuen's catalogue. E. Nesbit-Bland's "Red House" is leased for a honeymoon; there are some of the famous children as visitors; the atmosphere is sweet as lilacs and the fun of the sort that leaves one breathing freely, with the knots of nerve-strain at least partially loosened.

SOME time ago I asked for suggestions for a list of books to be given as presents, at the rate of one a year, to a class of boys in memory of one taken from them by death. The age of the heroes of these books was to rise with the years, and their characters were to be such as would compel their interest and admiration. I have received several replies, of which the one from Evelyn O'Connor, assistant editor of *Boys' Life*, is especially interesting from the experience of the writer in making such recommendations. "I assume," the letter goes on, "that the givers are not interested in suggestions about the great classics, nor about those classics for boys like 'Treasure Island,' 'Kidnapped,' or "The Black Arrow'; like 'Kim,' 'Captains Courageous'; like 'Men of Iron'; like 'Martin Hyde'; but are interested in more recent stories which have literary quality. A beautiful animal story which a boy of almost any age would certainly enjoy is 'Bambi,' by Felix Salten; and 'Master Skylark,' by John Bennett, is a splendid story of Shakespeare's time. 'After School,' by Laurie York Erskine, is a really inspiring story about the career of Nathan Hale, presented as influencing a young man and a boy of to-day. After 'David Blaize' boys might be interested to read 'The Hill,' by Horace Annesley Vachell, and 'The Big Row at Rangers,' by Kent Carr, which ought to appeal to boys of fifteen or sixteen. This story is unusual in that it has a witty hero who is really witty. 'Jinglebob,' by Rollins, is a story of the West and of cowboys quite unlike the current story of this type. 'Swords on the Sea,' by Agnes Danforth Hewes, is a highly colorful tale of Venice in her great days. 'The Trumpeter of Kracow,' by Eric P. Kelly, which was awarded the John Newberry medal of this year, is a remarkable story. Then there is 'The Trade Wind,' by Cornelia Meigs, a story of pre-revolutionary days and the sea. For the older boy, 'Drums,' by James Boyd, would surely be interesting, and Sandburg's 'Abe Lincoln Grows Up," the early chapters from his life of Lincoln ought to interest boys of fourteen up."

Another specialist, Fannie E. Teller of the Social Service Department of St. Christopher's Hospital for Children, Philadelphia, sends a list for a boy about Penrod's age, beginning to interest himself in society and girls; a list for which suggestions were asked. "Of course, you have thought of Walpole's 'Jeremy' books? Do you know of an English book called 'Lifting Mist,' by Austin Harrison? My copy I got straight from London for seven and six; the book deals with the youngest son of a high middle-class English family, who goes away to a public school. The boy, Sam, has a hard time to find himself, can find no grown person who will give him information about sex instead of pious advice, escapes an entanglement with an older boy, and finally adjusts through a very normal adolescent intensive friendship with an imaginative girl of sixteen. The book might be as good for the grandmother as for the boy himself.

"Do you know Hugh de Selincourt's 'One Little Boy'? I am sure you do. The book may be out of print, but it is worth the grandmother's getting, even if she has to advertise for it. I think it is unequalled in boy-literature for boys and for grown-ups, except that the book is marred by the unreality of the episode where the boy sees the girl bathing in the woods.

"For the second list, to be given to a boy's classmate, books about boys whose characters they would admire, for the present there is Kipling's 'Captains Courageous,' and in a year or two, when the boys are fourteen or fifteen, I think I should give them the following books, in their respective order, in four successive years: 'The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man,' published anonymously, but written, I think, by Weldon Johnson; Conrad's 'The Rover'; Somerset Maugham's 'Of Human Bondage'; Galsworthy's 'The Dark Flower.' "

This is a courageous list, and one that I have no doubt the boys would be greatly the better for reading. Whether it is the sort of list for which the giver of these books is looking I am not so sure, but I am happy to have so many of my own preferences confirmed by it. I do think, however, that "One Little Boy," indispensable for teachers and parents, would be less suitable for the age about which it is written.


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## Printing at Its Best

PRINTING at its best is hand-press printing. This is a statement which needs elucidation, and the recent issue by the Officina Bodoni of an elaborate *apologia* will serve as a reason for a summing up of the case for hand-press printing. A recent reviewer in writing of a very fine piece of modern book-printing by machinery said that he could hardly refrain from hyperbole in speaking of it. It was to his credit that he managed to refrain from more extensive eulogy than he did, because before one goes in for that sort of thing one ought, out of kindness to the reader as well as to the printer, to define one's terms a little carefully.

Hand-press printing makes use only of the fundamental elements of all letter-press printing—type, paper, ink, and press—but it is the form as well as the method of using each which distinguishes hand-printing from the machine product. The names are the same, and to the uninitiated the substances are identical—or at least near enough alike—but there are small but very important differences.

Take type. I believe that type from punches cut by hand is better than type which results from machine-made matrices. And the reason is that hand-cut punches, for reasons which are simple but technical, produce in the cast types a cleaner letter, and one which does not wear down in use to a different silhouette. This is apparently a fact, no matter what the protagonists for the machine-cut matrice may assert to be the possibilities of their method. Again, in cutting punches by hand the minute irregularities of design, due to the individuality of the punch-cutter, produce a virility in design which makes many older types so extraordinarily "alive" on the page, and the absence of which in modern machine-cut type produces such an effect of monotony. Furthermore, as will be evident later, type cast from matrices struck from hand-cut punches can be used to far better advantage on dampened hand-made paper, because of the desirable heavy pressure.

Paper is a problem to most people interested in fine printing, but the question is simple enough if certain qualities are kept clearly in mind. So far as excellence of material — substance — goes, some of the modern machine-made papers are as good as any paper ever made—perhaps better than a good deal of the old paper. Chemical control of rags, water, and bleach, expert supervision of the making, etc., can produce in a modern paper mill a quality of product which is pretty nearly perfect from the points of view of surface, wearing and lasting qualities, and agreeable feel. On the other hand, hand-made paper has an individualistic quality, in feel, surface, and texture, which it is not possible to get in the machine-made product. This, obviously, is not to say that one is abstractly *better* than the other—only that they cannot be compared without considering for what purpose they are to be used, and what the temper of the critic may be. There are people who really believe that automobiles are "beautiful." As examples of skill, motor cars are incomparable, perhaps, but compared with sailing vessels (the best of which are probably the loveliest constructions of man), automobiles are mass-production-ugliness. So in thinking of paper it is necessary to have very clearly in mind what one is looking for. And considered abstractly, apart from the mesmeric effect of modern machinery and mass-production, hand-made paper, by reason of its charming irregularity, its surface, and its color, is more interesting, more attractive, than machine-made paper.

Ink is made from color and medium—say lamp-black and linseed oil. That is simple—but the chemistry of ink as well as its behavior in use on the press is far more complex and baffling. It may be enough here to say that the color used in almost all modern inks, and especially in those used in power printing presses, is a product of modern manufacturing chemistry which works well under the conditions of modern printing-offices (that is, dry heat and rapidly revolving composition rollers) at the expense of depth of color. Ink for hand-presses can be made from old and simple pigments and it can be made very stiff—a desideratum which renders it quite unfit for machine use.

The press in use to-day is almost invariably the rapid, two-revolution cylinder printing machine. This press requires for its most efficient handling—and in view of the cost of maintaining such an expensive piece of apparatus, as well as of operating it, nothing less than the more efficient methods can survive—(a) machine-made paper of definitely even thickness over the whole sheet and every sheet; (b) a relatively soft ink which will distribute well over the fast-moving composition rollers; (c) the printing of the paper in a dry condition—because there is no time to adjust damp sheets on the continuously moving mechanism. The hand-press, its operations of starting and stopping being governed completely by the pressman for each impression, permits the use of dampened hand-made paper, as well as of the heavier-bodied inks. The hand-press is constantly under control of the pressman, in a way that no automatic machine can be. It is practically a hand tool, acting only when directly called on to act, never able to function except in concert with the operator.

Now the combination of these elements, superficially the same for each method, hand and machine, calls for different ideals, and results in different effects. Inasmuch as the power machine is an actuality, it is clear that it may or it may not have a reasonable place in the economic and artistic scheme. Into that question I do not care to go farther than to say that it should be apparent to almost anyone that there *may* be times when one method or the other is the more economical or practical—and for any who are interested I suggest Mr. Austin Freeman's treatment of the matter in his "Social Decay and Regeneration." What is more clear, I believe, is that, artistically and esthetically, hand-press printing is superior to that done on the power machine. And for these reasons:

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DAT OLE DAVIL MCEVOY *who has once more gone down to the sea in quips.*

*Hollywood Girl*, the new DIXIE DUGAN story by J. P. MCEVOY, is again working the critical fraternity up to a lather.

The book seems to tempt the reviewers to go MCEVOY themselves. . . . "*Hollywood Girl* brought more laughs from me than any other book of the season," says ELRICK B. DAVIS in *The Cleveland Press*, comparing MCEVOY with every English novelist from Richardson to Joyce, and adding the prize critical paradox of the season: "It may not be as funny as *Show Girl*, but I thought it was funnier."

To *The New York Sun*, the book is a "brilliant, lightning jab at 'the leaping lispies,'" which can't even bear quoting, since it must be read in its entirety.

Says LIONEL B. HOUSER in *The San Francisco News:*

> *There has been no more fierce and homicidal satire put on paper in a decade than this ebullition from the typewriter of the former middleweight champion greeting-card writer of America. He singes and sears every myth-honored yarn about Hollywood until no self-respecting person would ever breathe the word again except as a curse. Like this: "I hope all your children are born in Hollywood."*
>
> *It's uproariously funny, chiefly because of Mr. McEvoy's truly amazing facility for coining jazz-slang and wisecracks . . . aside from its superb wit, the thing is seriously a broadside against the movie colony; it's about time somebody began to appreciate* MR. MCEVOY *as literature in addition to humor. If we had a bottle of champagne, we'd break it over the bow of Hollywood Girl for the book's deserving of that inestimable honor.*

A comparison of the first few week's sale of *The Art of Thinking* and *The Psychology of Happiness* is extremely illuminating, although it probably proves little and guarantees less:

*The Art of Thinking*
PUBLISHED OCTOBER 25, 1928

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|---|---|
| ADVANCE SALE | 1,419 |
| FIRST WEEK | 53 |
| SECOND WEEK | 149 |
| THIRD WEEK | 63 |
| FOURTH WEEK | 115 |
| FIFTH WEEK | 279 |
| TOTAL | 2,078 |

*The Psychology of Happiness*
PUBLISHED OCTOBER 3, 1929

| | |
|---|---|
| ADVANCE SALE | 2,262 |
| FIRST WEEK | 145 |
| SECOND WEEK | 357 |
| THIRD WEEK | 301 |
| FOURTH WEEK | 251 |
| FIFTH WEEK | 427 |
| TOTAL | 3,743 |

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# THE PHOENIX NEST

IT has been hard for us to get down to work this afternoon because we have been reading in *Thurston Macauley's "Donn Byrne:* Bard of Armagh" (Century). This is a neat little biography, and recalls several things to us. It recalls Donn Byrne coming into the old *Century Magazine* offices in the old days, with the swagger of romance, telling tall yarns of a great many matters, it recalls his friendship with *Joyce Kilmer*, whom we also knew,—and it recalls one of his short stories, "Biplane Number 2" which the *Century* printed just before Byrne's "banner year." We were the first reader of that story in the *Century* offices, and it thrilled us to the core. The hither side of forty when he died, Byrne had published many books, and at least one that in our opinion will last a long time in literature, "Messer Marco Polo." He was born to write dramatic fiction, but he was also born a poet. And his best poetry was in his prose. . . .

Few who have been devouring that remarkable anthology, "The Omnibus of Crime" (Payson & Clarke), compiled by *Dorothy L. Sayers*, know her as other than a writer of fine detective stories, although her still more recent "Tristan of Brittany" published by the same firm is a translation that shows her poetic ability. This "Tristan" is from the fragments of the Romance written in the Twelfth Century by *Thomas the Anglo-Norman*, and inasmuch as Dorothy Leigh Sayers is an M. A. and sometime scholar of Somerville College, Oxford, it is not an unnatural work for her to undertake. The book bears an introduction by *George Saintsbury*, which is as good Saintsbury as you will find if you are a Saintsbury addict. But what we started to refer to was the fact that Dorothy Sayers also is first a poet, to prove which we refer to an early volume of hers published, we think, by Basil Blackwell in Oxford, which we once picked up in Liggett's drugstore in the Grand Central and wrote about in this journal when it was the old *Literary Review* of the *New York Evening Post*. The poetry is chiefly religious and, we think, "monstrous fine." We have always thought so, though at the moment we seem utterly unable to lay our hands upon the volume we once possessed. . . .

*William Edwin Rudge* has got out most tastefully an attractive essay entitled "On Growing Old," by *Mrs. William Lowell Putnam*. From it we steal the following paragraph, as it deals with an extraordinary American poet in a charming fashion:

> My mother's long stay, at an impressionable age, in England where the smallest hovels are given romantic names, made her want to have a name for our place in Brookline, but none could anyone think of that we liked until one summer afternoon as we were sitting about chatting, an inspiration came to my father and he said: "Let us call it Sevenels, for we are seven Lowells." We had been only six for the first seven years of our stay, until Amy was born,—the postscript, as her older brothers and sisters irreverently called her, for both my brothers were in college before her birth and even I was twelve years old,—but we remained seven for a long time, for, though my sister married and went away, my brother kept the number even by bringing his wife home to live.

"Sevenels" was, of course, *Amy Lowell's* home in Brookline for many years, and none who ever visited there will forget the large fireplace in the library or the long split logs that rested upon its high bed of ashes so neatly moulded as to look almost like a concrete base. That was one of the great and generous hearths of our past world, where good talk was always vivacious and free. . . .

That accomplished young artist, *J. Paget-Fredericks*, has illustrated a volume of *Edna St. Vincent Millay's* poems "Selected for Children." It begins with a group hitherto unpublished in book-form, "From a Very Little Sphinx." The illustrations are in black and white, the end-papers printed in green, and the jacket in colour. The book is most charming. . . .

*John Freeman*, the English poet who died recently, received the Hawthornden Prize in 1920, and then first he became really known. Delicate in health he worked for the Liverpool Victoria Friendly and Approved Societies for years, at length becoming secretary of the company. He did all his writing after onerous office hours. Last year in England his collected poems were published by Macmillan. He also was the author of four critical volumes, one on *George Moore*, one on *Herman Melville*, a book on "The Moderns" in 1916, and another that appeared in 1924 entitled "English Portraits and Essays." It is as a poet, however, that he will live. Starting with no advantages he achieved a fine distinction. . . .

The Pynson Printers have newly presented *Rockwell Kent's* "Candide" for Random House. All the Rockwell Kent drawings made for this work of *Voltaire's* in the signed Random House edition are contained in this new setting. The text has, however, been reset by hand in Garamond type and the edition is not limited. It is priced at five dollars. . . .

*Jacob E. Spannuth* of Pottsville, Pennsylvania, has published "Doings of Gotham," by *Edgar Allan Poe*, being Poe's contributions to *The Columbia Spy*, as contained in a series of letters written to the editors, together with various editorial comments and criticisms by Poe, and a poem entitled "New Year's Address of the Carriers of The Columbia Spy." The preface, introduction, and comments in the book are by *Thomas Ollive Mabbott*. . . .

*Orion Clemens* was the older brother of *Mark Twain*. He was gentle, whimsically charming and a memorable figure in Keokuk, Iowa. He was witty and absent-minded, and has been called "ridiculous." This he was not, though quite odd. In 1879 he was excommunicated from the Presbyterian Church of Keokuk for heresy, but he repeated nevertheless his lecture on "Man the Architect of our Religion" which had caused it all. This is all discussed in the October number of *The Palimpsest*, published monthly by The State Historical Society of Iowa, at Iowa City. In the issue is an article on Orion Clemens by *Fred W. Lorch*, excerpts from his wife, *Molly Clemens's* notebooks, and so on.

With many thanks for your kind attention: THE PHOENICIAN.

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whose first editions are increasingly sought in America as in England, has just completed *A Testament of Beauty*, a statement of his philosophy. William Rudge is printing a limited edition for America. (*Probable price* $25.00.) This poem is as intensely modern as the famous *Essay on Keats* ($1.00), with its new alphabet and outlook.

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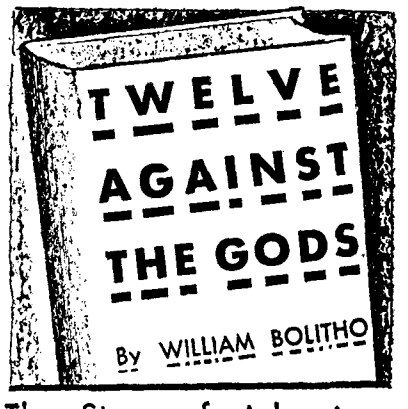

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# Points of View

## I Am the Poet

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:

SIR:

I am the poet who discerns the true meaning that lies within the tangled skein of life; the true interpreter of new and old ideas that navigate the brain as ships put out across an unknown sea to seek some port upon its farther shore, sailing before the wind, untrammeled, free, along a course no ship has sailed before.

'Tis thus I write. Unbound by slavish rules, I lay my course to suit the moment's whim; leaving the worship of fixed forms to fools, I cut the gordian knot and boldly limn life's ludicrous aspects as they appear, with no allegiance to the sacred cow of precedent; *sans* reverence, *sans* fear, I paint the picture as I see it now.

What matters it if I accumulate nothing but hunger and rejection slips, and dwell apart from the material state of kings and cabbages and shoes and ships? I shall have had my fling, and, at the end, shall lay me down in peace, at last, to rest, knowing that nothing matters; shall have kenned the depth of truth—that life is but a jest!

So, as a jest I treat it. When my pomes return to me unhonored—and unread—when editors refuse to give them homes, denying me thereby a crust of bread, I lift no voice to serenade the stars with a recital of the woes that be my portion; beat no wings against the bars of unkind fate that still imprison me.

I just sit down and write another pome, which editors—as usual—will reject unless I overcome full many an ohm of "sales resistance"—what could I expect?—and send it out, in hope to get a check. But if hope rides—as usual—to a fall, no tear shall wander down my leathery neck, for—nothing really matters, after all.

I thank you!

THE OUTLAW POET.

## Richard Henry Stoddard

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:

Sir:

I am engaged upon a biographical and critical study of Richard Henry Stoddard in connection with a dissertation which I am doing for New York University. I am, of course, interested in getting all the Stoddard manuscripts which I can. If it is in line with the policy of your *Review*, I would appreciate the insertion of a notice to this effect.

HARRY L. SHAW, JR.

## Which Is Right?

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:

Sir:

Recently I have been reading Dimnet's "The Art of Thinking," and Hilaire Belloc's "A Conversation with an Angel," and I have been much amused to discover a rather startling divergence of opinion—perhaps I should say of judgment—in these gentlemen. I refer to their pronouncements on Renan.

The Abbé Dimnet, in a chapter designed to offer suggestions on improvement in the quality of one's thought, adduces Ernest Renan as an example of a man who achieved an unusual degree of intelligence through training. He writes, "Renan was not a genius. Neither as a philosopher, a scholar, or as a writer can he be compared to superior men. Yet what intelligence! What insight and what outsight!"

And Mr. Belloc (in his essay "On Renan"): "Great as he is in scholarship, and much greater in the power of expression, in reasoning power he fails." And, after demonstrating at some length the shortcomings of Renan's reasoning power, he concludes: "Now a comparison of such insufficiencies points, I say, particularly to untelligence."

To me it is rather remarkable that two writers who, one should expect, ought to agree on such a subject, should display such a divergence of opinion. Is it safest, I wonder, to follow the witty Abbé or the learned Belloc?

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## Round About Parnassus

(*Continued from page* 354)

ways written under pressure, but like few journalists he has preserved his own private madness, "more flagrant in the brain." That is why we call him poet; not for his journalistic verse. He is likely to do anything with his imagination when you least expect it.

Morris Bishop's "*Paramount* Poems," published by Minton, Balch & Company, are well handled and most amusing. Despite his slogan, "If it isn't a *Paramount* it isn't a poem," he runs a bit to stereotype, however.

Nevertheless, the opening poem about an elf convulsed us, and "Kiss Me Good Night, Dear," is another favorite. We also like particularly "Answering Yours of (Date Illegible)" and "Why and How I Killed My Wife," the first dealing with the words one can't make out in the loved one's correspondence, the second with corrections of pronunciation made by the too purist spouse. To illustrate how neatly Mr. Bishop handles his ideas in verse, here is one from "Answering Yours":

*Your writing swoops and swirls, with no suggestion whether*
*I am an Awful Slob or only Awful Slow;*
*Do you perhaps suggest that we should "roam" together?*
*Or is it double oo?*

Even cleverer is the trick used in "Why and How I Killed My Wife." Viz.:

*"Correct my manners or my waggeries,*
*But though my accent's not the berries,*
*Spare my pronunciation's vagaries—"*
*To that she merely said—"Vagaries!"*

E. B. W.'s verses in "The Lady Is Cold" go in less for the out-and-out comic than do Morris Bishop's. They are not so saliently written, but they have facility and grace. Sometimes they run rather thin. His "Five O'Clock" and "West Street" are spirited lyrics of New York. Both light versifiers are naturally taken by the verse of four lines that ends with either a mono- or duosyllable. Thus, by E. B. W.:

*The owl-faced phone begins its questioning,*
*My pencil leaves an odd, cubistic track,*
*And like as not you'll hear me say: "I'll ring*
*You back."*

There are other modes also that have been adopted since Calverley in which they are expert. Nevertheless, each man retains a certain individuality, Bishop particularly; which is a good deal to say when there are still such veteran practitioners in the field as "F. P. A." in the United States and A. P. Herbert in England, men who know all the ropes and all the turns and twists.

Recommended

OUR SINGING STRENGTH. By ALFRED KREYMBORG. Coward-McCann.

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ONION—The bulb of the plant Allium cepa, also the plant, having slender hollow tubular leaves

LILIACEOUS—Pertaining to the family Liliaceae, a large family of MONOCOTYLEDONOUS plants, the lily family, typifying the order Liliales.

MONOCOTYLEDONOUS—One of the two subclasses of ANGIOSPERMOUS plants, including all which produce a single cotyledon.

ANGIOSPERMOUS—Having ovules and seeds in a closed ovary; hence of the class Angiospermae.

*In defining a simple word like "Onion" a certain well-known dictionary "detours" the searcher through three unfamiliar words, themselves needing definition. In contrast, note the simple, direct definition given (at left) from The WINSTON Simplified Dictionary.*

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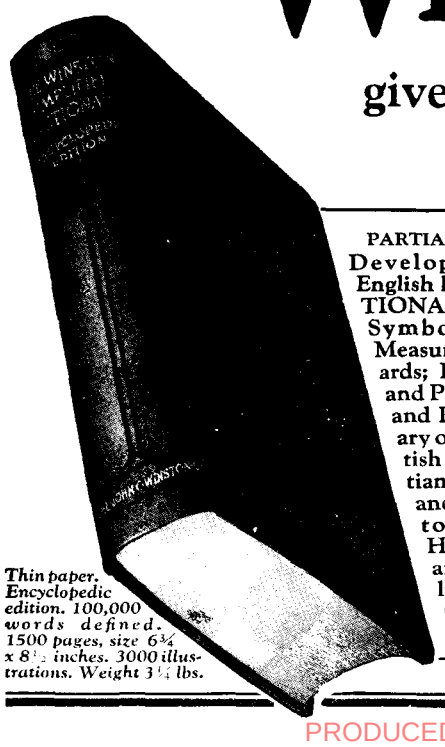

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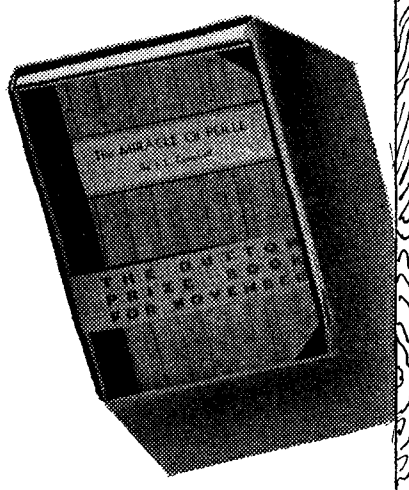

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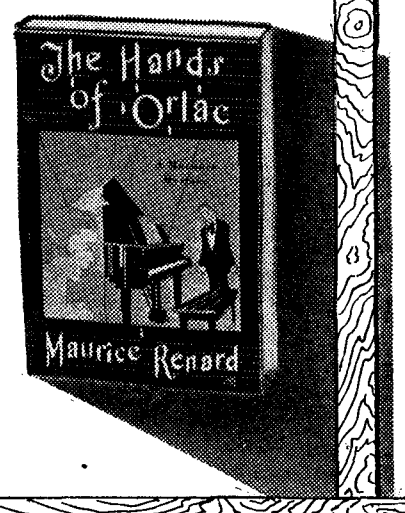

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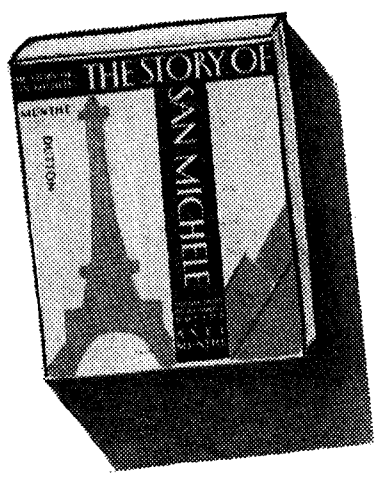


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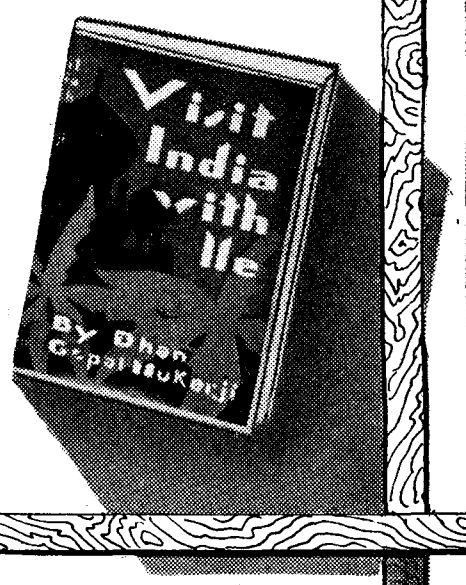


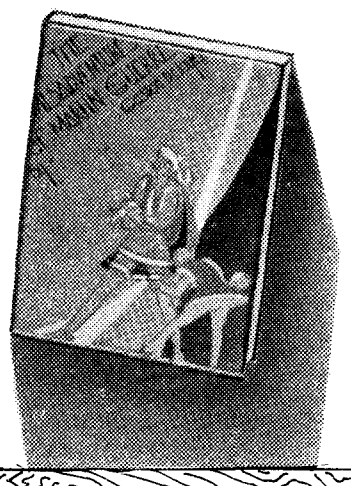

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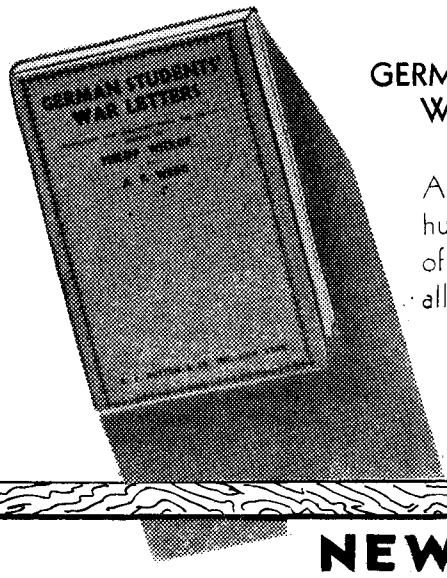


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